

SUSAN SONTAG

*An Annotated Bibliography*  
1948–1992

*Compiled by*

LELAND POAGUE  
KATHY A. PARSONS

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# SUSAN SONTAG

AN ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY 1948–1992

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GARLAND PUBLISHING, INC.  
A MEMBER OF THE TAYLOR & FRANCIS GROUP  
NEW YORK & LONDON/2000

Published in 2000 by  
Garland Publishing, Inc.  
A member of the Taylor & Francis Group  
29 West 35th Street  
New York, NY 10001

This edition published in the Taylor & Francis e-Library, 2005.

“To purchase your own copy of this or any of Taylor & Francis or Routledge’s collection of thousands of eBooks please go to [www.eBookstore.tandf.co.uk](http://www.eBookstore.tandf.co.uk).”

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**Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data**

Poague, Leland A., 1948–  
Susan Sontag: an annotated bibliography, 1948–1992/  
Leland Poague, Kathy A. Parsons.

p. cm.

Includes indexes.

ISBN 0-8240-5731-7 (alk. paper)

1. Sontag, Susan, 1933– —Bibliography. I. Parsons,  
Kathy A. II. Title.

Z8826.45.P63 2000

[PS3569.06547]

016.818'5409—dc21 99–33532

CIP

The authors and publisher are especially grateful to  
Susan Sontag for granting permission to quote at length  
from her copyrighted works.

ISBN 0-203-90175-4 Master e-book ISBN

ISBN 0-203-90179-7 (Adobe eReader Format)

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# Preface

Just as Susan Sontag's creative output is varied, complex, and unique, so are the processes and guidelines we employed to research and compile this bibliography of her works and their reception. By way of explaining some of these complexities, this preface is arranged into two main parts. In the first, we briefly recount the history of our research and describe the general guidelines that were applied throughout. The second part addresses more specific bibliographic issues pertaining to individual sections of the bibliography; here we explain such special interpretations of our general guidelines as individual sections, by virtue of media or genre or editorial considerations, frequently required.

Researching so prolific a writer as Sontag proved to be an amazingly time-consuming, sometimes frustrating, yet always fascinating and rewarding activity. We used traditional sources of information as well as nontraditional and newly emerging research technologies. In fact, when this research project started, in 1982, computerized information sources were just becoming readily available to humanities scholars. In 1999, however, bibliographic databases are quite common; "hard copy" or paper-copy information is the more endangered data source nowadays. The types of sources we consulted are as varied as Sontag's many genres, topics, and publication venues. We used indexing and abstracting tools in both print and computerized versions; bibliographies on literature, art, and women writers; various "books in print" and national library compendiums, and so on. During the course of our research, we reviewed more than 170 index or bibliographic sources, far too many to list. Standard sources of information we consulted included the *MLA International Bibliography*, *Dissertation Abstracts*, *Index Translationum*, *Humanities Index*, *Book Review Index*, *Art Index*, *Philosopher's Index*, and the *Arts and Humanities Citation Index*. In addition, we utilized computerized union catalogues—OCLC, RLIN, eventually FirstSearch and WorldCat—and also indexes pertaining to foreign language periodicals and books, such as *Romanische Bibliographie*, *Indice español de humanidades*, *Bulletin signalétique*, *French XX*, among others. A source we did not systematically attend to was daily newspapers, with the obvious exception of the *New York Times*. (All citations to the *Times* refer to the Late City edition available via University Microfilms.)

We also gathered information about Sontag via less formal or official channels. Over the years, friends, family members, and colleagues often sent clippings or references. Likewise, many pieces of information were gathered serendipitously; we often stumbled across a new item while locating another we had already been directed to. In the summer of 1992, moreover, we wrote to national libraries worldwide inquiring about translations of Sontag's works. In addition, we profited immensely from the assistance of Susan Sontag herself. In response to draft versions of our list, she graciously sent us copies of her own "Publication History," in both 1994 and 1998. Sontag's lists, we should note, cover material written, sold, translated, and solicited, and include a considerable number of incomplete entries; given the vagaries of international periodical publication, this is hardly surprising. (Sontag's list does not include films or recordings.) Indeed, Sontag's account of her pre-1994 material is considerably expanded in the 1998 version of her list. Her lists and ours alike, therefore, are works very much in (retrospective) progress.

The bibliography covers materials written by Sontag and about Sontag from 1948 through 1993, with some exceptions and qualifications. Because we shut down the research machinery in 1992, as explained below, our "comprehensiveness" extends only through (roughly) 1990, the point in "publication time" most mid-1992 indexes and databases had reached at that juncture. We stopped active research in 1992 when it became distressingly clear that we would be pushed to our limits (and to the page count limitations urged on us by the publisher) just to annotate the materials found to date. Since 1992, then, we have directed our energies chiefly to writing annotations, though we have made a point of revisiting major index sources on occasion just in case they included new Sontag-related items that required our attention. Sometimes they did. And we continued to follow leads to other materials if they fell within our time frame. The major exception to the research stoppage involves *The Volcano Lover*, published to wide acclaim in 1992. Given the novel's impact, and Sontag's assistance when it came to updating our list of her other works, we thought it would be a great mistake to exclude it. We have thus endeavored to track its reception by reviewers and critics— translations of it, too—through 1993, though our coverage of *The Volcano Lover* is obviously less extensive than of Sontag's other books.

Throughout this project, we have made every attempt to gain "hands on" access to all items to verify their existence or provenance and the accuracy of our bibliographic data. By "hands on," we mean either that one of us or one of the many people who assisted us saw the piece and verified publication data. During the initial phases of the project, Dr. Poague spent weeks amounting to months at the Library of Congress. He also visited Columbia University and North Hollywood High School. Material not acquired in these or subsequent research expeditions and not available in the Iowa State University Library was requested through interlibrary loan. In doing so, we always asked for title pages or periodical mastheads in order to confirm publication data. In numerous cases,

our only confirmation was the fact that the item arrived as ordered, on the basis of the data we'd provided. (We have made many judgment calls about how and when to mark these uncertainties.) If we could not obtain a piece, but were convinced of its existence and pertinence, we have included it and marked its entry number with an asterisk. Likewise, items we did acquire but for which the bibliographic data was in some significant way doubtful are also marked with an asterisk. Obviously, items we did not see could not be more than minimally annotated.

Our primary guide to bibliographic style was *The Chicago Manual of Style*, 14th edition. In general, we have carefully followed its guidelines, though we have adopted some few variant practices. Because of the number of items we acquired or found reference to, we opted for the shortest entry-style possible. We have abbreviated months in periodical entries, have gone "short" on page numbers, and have shortened or abbreviated publisher names. (In some few cases, material was obtained from clipping files; we were not always successful in providing page numbers.) For foreign publisher names, we have used the abbreviations employed by *Index Translationum*. We discuss abbreviations and their rationale under separate heading.

We wrote annotations with two goals in mind. The first was to provide prospective readers with a picture or map of the item in question. The longer the work, the more difficult this became, but also, we thought, the more useful. The second goal was to provide a memory aid for those readers who had already encountered a given item, both to assist in recall and to suggest an analytical framework wherein those recollections might make more thorough or cumulative sense. Especially in the primary portion of the bibliography (see below), these two goals did not always or readily accord with one another; a word meant to mark a strain of imagery in a given section of *Death Kit* might seem quite pointless to a reader unfamiliar with the novel. Though we have worked hard to compress these annotations, their length and complexity go a long way toward explaining the years required to complete our work.

Our bibliography has, per Garland practice, two parts. [Part One \(Sections A–G\)](#) covers "Primary Works," those items written or directed or created by Susan Sontag, and it is arranged into sections based chiefly on the type of material included (books, essays, films, etc.). [Part Two \(Sections H–K\)](#) covers "Secondary Works," items *about* Sontag and her career. Again, the arrangement is by sections based on the type of material included (essays, dissertations, book reviews, etc.). This portion of the book is somewhat less comprehensive than [Part One](#). In the secondary bibliography, for example, we did not seek to include or annotate all reprints or editions of essays, books, or book chapters—though if by chance we acquired such information, we included it. Likewise, we did not research foreign language versions of secondary materials that originally appeared in English.

In [Sections B–K](#) of the bibliography, entries are arranged in "rough" chronology, on the assumptions that we could not recover the actual publication

sequence and that our compromise arrangement would more readily match up with library reference, storage, and retrieval systems. Works are generally listed chronologically as follows: items dated only by year precede those issued quarterly within that year; items dated quarterly (listed uniformly here in Winter, Spring, Summer, Fall order) precede those dated by month or day; items carrying identical publication dates appear in alphabetical order; translations and reprintings are listed (with some few exceptions) as subentries of the original publication. In summary, our “chronology” always proceeds from larger to finer temporal units—years, seasons, months, days. All entries for “June” will thus always precede entries dated “1 June”; where a single entry is dated both by season and month, the latter, more time-specific, designation is used. Likewise, where an item carries a hyphenated publication date (e.g., May-June), the latest date cited (here, June) governs its order of entry. When a periodical employs multiple pagination schemes or numbering practices (sequentially by number, say, *as well as* quarterly by volume and number), we have used one consistently, as far as our data allowed us to, typically whichever scheme seemed likeliest to yield the item via interlibrary loan. The exceptions to this chronological scheme are found in [Section A](#), where we have done our best to list Sontag’s books in order of publication, and in [Sections D](#) and [J](#)—see below.

[Section A](#) (*Books, Collections, Etc.*) includes every book-format publication we have encountered, more than a few of them pamphletstyle issues of longer Sontag essays, some of them pirate editions over which Sontag had no control. Given Sontag’s assistance, this is clearly the most comprehensive section of the bibliography. Within this chapter, we have followed the *Chicago Manual of Style* rule that successive “printings” do not count as new “editions,” though various international publishing practices made application of this rule difficult. Likewise, it is *Chicago* style to report only the first publisher listed on the title page, thus *not* to include the fact that The Noonday Press is “A Division of Farrar, Straus & Giroux.” We have largely followed this practice, with some few exceptions. The “Noonday” instance is especially problematic; many items published under the Noonday imprint only mark that fact on the spine or the paper cover; their title pages more often than not list Farrar, Straus, and Giroux as the only publisher. In such cases, so do we.

In order to save space, we have not only abbreviated publisher names but have listed, again per *Chicago* style, only the first city of publication, with one exception. Books published in Belgium and Holland are listed separately in *Index Translationum*, often with separate publication venues (Antwerp vs. Utrecht). It seems clear, however, that all of the books are Dutch translations, by the same translator, from the same publisher—A.W.Bruna & Zoon—so are probably in each case the same book. As we have not had direct access to these, we mark all of them with asterisks and include *both* publication venues. Our research also uncovered several book club or privately printed editions of Sontag’s books, as well as some proof copies. We chose not to include these as separate entries because they are seldom bibliographically different from volumes already

listed, nor are they readily available. The significant exception here is the Franklin Library edition of *The Volcano Lover*, which includes “A Special Message for the First Edition from Susan Sontag.”

A number of Sontag’s books carry descriptive bylines or subtitles. Usage among Sontag scholars—Sontag’s own usage—favors dropping these, with the obvious exceptions of *Against Interpretation and Other Essays* and *The Volcano Lover: A Romance*. Many European editions of Sontag’s books also carry subtitles of various lengths and emphases. When we have seen the book, and could judge the subtitle’s (biblio)graphic weight or import, we have made judgments about inclusion by analogy with standard usage. (Thus we have dropped all subtitles from Seuil editions of Sontag’s books.) Absent direct access, we have followed our source bibliographer’s decision on these accounts.

**Section B** (*Essays, Articles, and Review Essays*) includes the major portion of Sontag’s journal scholarship and criticism, though most of those entries are annotated in **Section A**, where they appear as chapters of various collections of Sontag’s essays. **Section B** entries, therefore, typically annotate the difference between the original publication and its subsequent reprint versions or translations. We should note here that many of Sontag’s essays have, over the years, been reprinted in first-year composition texts, though such books go in and out of print so quickly that tracking this material was obviously impossible. By contrast, we have tried to keep track of those Sontag essays that have been reprinted in text-anthologies aimed at more advanced students in, for example, film theory or literary theory, most of which are also listed in Sontag’s own “Publication History.”

**Section C** (*Short Fictions*) includes not only Sontag’s short stories but also several short plays.

**Section D** (*Reviews, Forewords, and Prefaces*) includes works of several kinds, and risks some overlap with **Section B**. Both **Sections B** and **D** include items that were published as book reviews, marked as such by publication venue (*Book Week*, say) or by an editorial decision to run the piece within the book review section of a periodical (like *Partisan Review*). Likewise, both **Sections B** and **D** include pieces of various lengths. Though we considered giving up the generic distinction between “essays” and “reviews” and thus collapsing these two sections into one, we finally decided to retain the distinction because Sontag’s practices and purposes really do vary. In some cases, her reviews focus precisely and fairly exclusively on the book or film in question. Such reviews, regardless of length, are found in **Section D**. Where the item under review is less a subject of analysis than an occasion for addressing some larger brace of issues or topics, the piece is listed in **Section B**. Furthermore, many items published *as reviews* were clearly designed to be Prefaces or Forewords; often these are Sontag’s longer “review” pieces. Though Sontag is emphatically a “writer,” she is also an omnivorous and generous reader, hence the importance to her career of the “prefatory” or “introductory” essay as a genre. We acknowledge that importance by retaining the category. Indeed, here we also make an exception to

our rules regarding chronology. When an essay clearly designed as a Preface or Foreword appears in book and periodical forms in the same year, we list the book version first, regardless of whether the periodical version appeared earlier, which is usually the case.

*Section E (Films and Recordings)* includes entries covering a wide variety of materials: the films Sontag wrote and directed, films she appeared in, recordings of lectures, of radio interviews, and so on. Most of this material surfaced via OCLC searches. Some items are only available on site. Some items could not be located at all. For economy's sake, we have only included complete credits for the films Sontag directed; videotapes of movies are treated as "reprints," for which we provide only minimal additional information. It seems likely, given Sontag's life as a public lecturer, that our accounting of audio- and videotapes is far from complete. Indeed, only lately were we made aware of Sontag's many contributions to National Public Radio. We regret that their number and cost made timely inclusion impossible. Interested readers should consult NPR directly for more information. (Running times in this chapter are often approximate, rounded up to the next minute.)

*Section F (Interviews)* includes both question-and-answer interviews and "profile" pieces derived from interview situations. Though there is much interesting material here, it is difficult to summarize and more than usually redundant—Sontag is asked the same questions in interview after interview. For economy's sake, we have annotated the section as a whole rather than individual items. We have tried to represent the *range* of questions and answers. We have tried to give some indication of what foreign-language interviews cover. But often we have let the title of an English-language interview stand as summary enough. For similar reasons, interviews included in Dr. Poague's *Conversations with Susan Sontag*—the primary exception to our 1993 cut-off date—are not annotated beyond listing their reprint venue, on the assumption that their availability renders annotation less necessary.

*Section G (Juvenilia and Miscellaneous)* includes Sontag's high school journalism, published chapters of her novels, scenes from *Alice in Bed*, letters to the editor, published symposia, reference works, articles or books that quote Sontag at some length, and other difficult-to-classify items. The full title of the North Hollywood High School newspaper was, we should note, *The Arcade*.

*Section H (Book Chapters, Essays, and Review Articles)* includes essays or chapters in which Sontag or her work is either an explicit and primary subject of analysis or in which she is treated at some length in a significant subunit of the essay or chapter. Though most appeared in scholarly journals, a few come from intellectual "slicks" like *Atlantic Monthly* or *Harper's*. A few are book reviews of such length that they match in depth and significance other essays, or have played a role in the larger Sontag discourse equivalent to an essay. In some few cases, what was once a mid-size review of a Sontag book became a book chapter of some import, in which case the original review version appears here.

*Section I (Dissertations, Books, and Monographs)* includes several dissertations devoted exclusively to Sontag, two of which eventually became books (though the Kennedy book was published in 1995; see our Introduction). We did not research M.A. theses pertaining to Sontag. Though we have followed convention by including page-number information about dissertations, we have followed *Chicago* rather than *Dissertation Abstracts* style in so doing, as we have in [Section A](#). That is, we list only *numbered* pages.

*Section J (Book Reviews)* includes every English-language book review we could locate through 1993 except those already listed in [Section H](#). We did *not* seek these materials via newspaper indexes; most of what we have is derived from book review indexes and general indexes, like the *British Humanities Index*. So there are probably reviews we do not have. Likewise, though we kept an eye out for foreign-language reviews—of Sontag’s English originals or of their various translations—we found very few. We expect that those reviews exist and are best accessed via more locally specific index sources.

Contrary to our standard practice elsewhere, items in [Section J](#) are arranged according to the book under review. A special case involves *Illness as Metaphor*, *AIDS and Its Metaphors*, and the combined edition of the two, which appeared in 1990. It is the rare review of *AIDS and Its Metaphors* that does not compare it, often at some length, to its predecessor. Their joint publication in 1990 confirms this kinship and leads to the view that all three are best annotated together. Indeed, in the name of economy we have annotated less by item than by the book under review; if a given review only repeats an earlier one, we have typically dropped or radically foreshortened the subsequent annotation. For that matter, many reviews are so brief that we decided simply to list them by date and venue, without further elaboration.

*Section K (Miscellaneous)* includes early public notices of Sontag, letters responding to her works, profile pieces not listed in [Section F](#), selected reference work entries on Sontag, articles adducing Sontag or her milieu in ways Sontag scholars would likely find significant, literary works and films in which Sontag features as a character or reference point, reviews of Sontag’s theater productions, of books *about* Sontag, and so on. Most of the coverage of Sontag’s 1982 Town Hall address—of her political activities more generally—is included here. Pressures of time and page-count have required greater selectivity of entry and annotation here than in any other section of the book.

A word, in closing, about our indexes. As often, we have followed the general example of Thomas Leitch’s 1993 Garland bibliography of works by and about Lionel Trilling. Leitch has a title index; also an author index, though this latter covers some subject-style information, too, as when one author replies to another. Similarly here. But our indexes are even more selective and interpretive, we think, than Leitch’s. We do not index foreign-language Sontag titles, apart from those Sontag pieces of which the non-English text is the initial (sometimes the only) instance. (In such cases, we also indexed the initial English title.) We do not index editors, translators, or other editorial figures unless they earned

indexing on “author” grounds, and not always then. Index references to Sections [J](#) and [K](#) are very selective. In every case, we have based indexing decisions on our sense of the use that will likely be made of our research, a matter of educated guesses. We guessed our best.

*Kathy A. Parsons*

# Acknowledgments

This bibliography *began*, years ago, as a short book about Sontag to appear, under the editorship of Warren French, in Twayne's American Authors series. Our first thanks, accordingly, must go to Professor French, for getting us started, and finally for cutting us loose when the complexity of the project grew well beyond the series mandate. Similarly, abiding thanks are due to the editorial crew at Garland Publishing—William Cain (always), Phyllis Korper, Kristi Long, eventually John Morgan—for having the patience to see this version of the project through to completion; it *was* a long shot.

Our debts to literary and library colleagues worldwide are, quite literally, beyond our abilities to acknowledge in toto; the list of usual suspects alone is much too long to provide full particulars, and the number of librarians who gladly assisted us without pausing to provide acknowledgment copy is also extensive, given the time we have devoted to research. Libraries we have visited personally, in addition to the Library of Congress, include those at Columbia University, University of Toronto, Penn State University, UCLA, University of Washington, University of Iowa, and Northern Illinois University. Libraries and archives we consulted with by correspondence or telephone include the All-Union State Order of the Red Banner of Labour Library of Foreign Literature (Moscow), the U.S.S.R. National Library of the Order of Lenin (Moscow), the St. St. Cyril and Methodius National Library (Sofia), the Biblioteka Narodowa (Warsaw), the National Széchény Library (Budapest), the Kongl. Biblioteket (Stockholm), the National Library (Prague), România Biblioteca Națională (Bucharest), the Nationale Bibliotheek (the Hague), the Bibliothèque Royale Albert 1er (Brussels), Det kongelige Bibliotek (Copenhagen), the Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale Vittorio Emanuele II (Rome), the Istituto Centrale Per Il Catalogo Unico Delle Biblioteche Italiane (Rome), the Biblioteca Nacional (Lisbon), the Biblioteca Nacional (Madrid), the National Library of Iceland, the Biblioteca Nacional de Chile, the Biblioteca Nacional (Mexico City), the National Diet Library (Tokyo), the South African Library (Cape Town), the National Library of Medicine (Bethesda, MD), and the libraries at Helsinki University, Rockland Community College (NY), Michigan State University, Vassar College, and Illinois State University. We also consulted with reference

department staff at the Museum of Radio and Television (New York), the Museum of Modern Art, and the Swedish Film Institute.

Abiding thanks are due to all of the library professionals who, knowingly or not, advanced the cause of our research. We tender those thanks gladly, and in part by paying direct homage to a select few individuals whose names must stand for the many: specifically, Dr. Louise Teems, the librarian of North Hollywood High School, and the many librarians and support staff of the Iowa State University Library, especially its Microforms and Interlibrary Loan offices: Marilyn K. Moody, Leanne Alexander, Pam Williams, Lisa Gilbert, Greg Huggard, Steve Shuman, Debbie Casey, Peggy Blumer, Kathryn Patton, Martha Richardson, Susan Congdon, Mary Jane Thune, Kristi Schaaf, and Wayne Pedersen. Thanks also to humanities librarian Ed Goedecken.

In addition to professional librarians, we also relied upon a small army of research assistants and Sontag-interested colleagues, most of them working gratis. Thanks are due to Grant Burns, Vida Cross, Jennie Ver Steeg, Kathleen Flood, Katherine Sotol, Amy Poague, Melissa Poague, Susan Poague, Dennis Poague, Sueli Mingoti, Loren Nerell, William McCarthy, Eric Dean, Susan Carlson, Neil Nakadate, Loring Silet, Tim Sanford, Jon Sanford, Scott McLemee, Linda Galyon, Fern Kupfer, Julia Lesage, Nandor Bokor, Lynell Chvala, Stefan Jonsson, and Jenny Nilsson. Jennifer Quinlan Clayton worked earnestly and skillfully on this project far above and beyond the duty required of an undergraduate research assistant. That she has received several advanced degrees since her time on the project does not lessen our debt to her efforts.

A legion far larger was deployed to read and help annotate all of the foreign-language materials we acquired. These helpers include Suzanne van der Valk, Willem Langenberg, and Carl Roberts (Dutch); Donald Benson (Afrikaans); Amy Poague, Susan Benner, Sheryl St. Germain, Timothy Jennings, José Amaya, Dawn Bratsch-Prince, and Michael Mendelson (Span.); Kathy Leonard (Span., Ital.); Robert Bernard (Fr., Ital.); Gloria Betcher, Kris Fresonke, Gianna Scopas Langenberg, and Christiana Langenberg (Ital.); Kaija Kuusisto-Wolf (Fin.); David Holger, Lynell Chvala, Stefan Jonsson, and Jenny Nilsson (Swed.); Dennis Poague and Sueli Mingoti (Port.); Robert Ewald, Maren Pink, Margaret Johnson, James Dow, Mark Rectanus, Volker Hegelheimer, Barbara Mathies, and Beth Collins (Ger.); Irina Kabanova (Russ., Ger.); Olga Simonova (Russ., Bulgarian); Matt Roberts, John Purcell, and Irina Bassis (Russ.); Monika Jankowiak (Pol.); Zora Zimmerman (Serbo-Croatian, Slovene); Nandor Bokor (Hungarian); Miriam Engler (Hebrew); Qian Luan, Luchen Li (Chinese); Yukari Tamazaki, Shinobu Tsuruta, and Urara Kishimoto (Japanese). Thanks to each and all!

Another category of gratitude is that we owe to those faculty and staff colleagues who provided technical assistance, either by helping us acquire and use various computers or computer applications, or by their advice on matters graphic or stylistic. Bob Boston helped in the project's earliest, most computer-primitive phases; Don Payne provided computer wisdom at many turns, not to

mention his infinitely helpful familiarity with the *Chicago Manual of Style*. Jeffrey Balvanz, Steve Kovarik, and Volker Hegelheimer helped us to manage foreign accents. Susan Knippel provided useful computer advice. Lee Honeycutt managed many last-minute computer and format problems. Special thanks go to Rebecca Burnett for designing our page format.

Scholarly thanks are also due to Liam Kennedy. Though his *Susan Sontag: Mind as Passion* is discussed at some length in our Introduction, it is not listed in the bibliography proper. Then again, his 1990 dissertation is (see [I20](#)). Per the stipulations of University Microfilms and the British Library Document Supply Centre, we have solicited and received Professor Kennedy's permission to quote from the microfiche.

Kathy A. Parsons would like to thank, for editorial and bibliographic advice and moral support, her current and former Iowa State University Library colleagues Eleanor Mathews, Diana Shonrock, Rebecca Jackson, Kris Stacy-Bates, Joyce Lindstrom, and Kris Gerhard. Special thanks also are due to TJ Lusher and to Major League Baseball, especially the boys of the summer of 1998, Messrs. McGwire and Sosa, who provided an alternative mutual obsession and conversation topic during the bibliographic dog days.

Leland Poague would like to thank the Department of English of Iowa State University for repeatedly providing department-level research support—through the terms of office of three different department chairs: Frank Haggard, Dale Ross, and Tom Kent. Thanks for Faculty Improvement Leaves and research funding are similarly owed to the administration of Iowa State University, especially the offices of the Provost and of the Dean of the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences. Friends and colleagues who offered bibliographic and editorial assistance at various junctures and venues include, in addition to many already mentioned, Dana Polan, Mari Hall, Ray Carney, Susan Yager, Robert Hollinger, Scott Consigny, John Harris, Chris Kubiak, David Heddendorf, Brenda Daly, Judy Ashkenaz, and Nancy Crompton. Several (by now) former students have influenced his thinking on Sontag: Kevin West, Tim Walker, Diana Swanson, and Arnold Stead (see [I21](#)). Thanks to all. He would also like to thank, for hospitality and fellowship during his research travels, Tim Sanford and Lisa Finstrom, Jon and Carol Sanford, Jimmy Beaumont, Jack and Barb Rayman, Maggie and Brian Wollaston, and Bob and Bobbie Nerell. Thanks also to Professor Bertram Potts and his colleagues at the Daniel S. Totten Foundation, for exemplifying the values of scholarly fortitude and perseverance: *Gaudeamus igatur!*

In closing, we extend our sincere and abiding gratitude to Susan Sontag herself, and to the several of her assistants with whom we have worked, Karla Eoff and Benedict Yeoman especially. In addition to granting us permission to quote her beyond fair use, Susan Sontag twice provided us with her own list of her publications, and did her best, in the midst of her ever-active schedule, to field a long series of difficult-to-answer bibliographic questions. Though we are

well aware of many gaps in our research, they would be far the greater in number and consequence without Susan Sontag's sustained cooperation. We are deeply in her debt.

# Publisher Abbreviations

We have followed *Chicago Manual of Style* guidelines for the abbreviation of publisher names, dropping initial “The” and final “Inc.” or “Ltd.” We have followed the examples set by *Index Translationum* in foreshortening the names of foreign-language publishers. Beyond these rubrics, we have made economies mostly with regards to publishers frequently encountered and to titles published in series. “Farrar, Straus & Giroux” is thus abbreviated as “FS&G”; its later manifestations as “Farrar, Straus, Giroux” and “Farrar Straus Giroux” are represented by “FSG.” Many translations of Sontag’s books appeared in one or another series devoted to foreign writers; we have dropped all such designations. Many Sontag books have appeared in paperback under specialized imprints or through divisions of a larger publishing house. Though it is *Chicago* practice to ignore “division of” designations, we have adopted the following rubric for representing such instances when it seemed bibliographically necessary. We list first, in abbreviated form, the imprint found on the title page, followed immediately by the publisher listed on the copyright page, also abbreviated. Thus “A Delta Book” published by “Dell Publishing Company” will appear as “Delta, Dell.” Likewise for several imprints listed below. By obvious analogy, we have dropped “Books” from the names of several additional publishers. The following abbreviations are used throughout.

Ambassador Books	Ambassador
Anchor Books, Doubleday	Anchor, Doubleday
Avon Books	Avon
A. W. Bruna & Zoon	Bruna
Bedford Books of St. Martin’s Press	Bedford, St. Martin’s
A Bedford Book, St. Martin’s Press	Bedford, St. Martin’s
Carl Hanser Verlag	Hanser
Éditions du Seuil	Seuil
A Delta Book, Dell Publishing Co.	Delta, Dell
Farrar, Straus & Giroux	FS&G
Farrar, Straus, Giroux	FSG
Farrar Straus Giroux	FSG

The Noontday Press  
Penguin Books  
A Plume Book, New American Library  
St. Martin's Press, A Bedford Book  
A Signet Book, New American Library  
Vintage Books, Random House

Noontday  
Penguin  
Plume, NAL  
St. Martin's, Bedford  
Signet, NAL  
Vintage, Random House

# Introduction

## THE WAY SHE WRITES NOW: NOTES ON “SONTAG”

There is an essay to be written on the art and concept of “the title.” *Susan Sontag: An Annotated Bibliography 1948–1992* might prove an excellent source text in that it is, first and foremost, a list of titles—indeed, several such lists. Moreover, many of these titles are repeated, or exist in multiple forms. Usually Sontag’s own title for a piece is the title it initially carries—or so we assume. Sometimes Sontag’s own title is replaced (one imagines) by editorial fiat. “One Culture and the New Sensibility” initially appeared as “From New York: Susan Sontag,” though she retitled the piece when it appeared in *Against Interpretation*. Sometimes Sontag’s own title seems known (almost) only to her: “Calvino” was apparently written under the working title “The Eros of Reading”; “The Double Standard of Aging” began life, it would seem, as “A Moveable Doom.”<sup>1</sup> But other title changes seem likelier to have had Sontag’s blessing: “Under the Sign of Saturn” was initially published in the *New York Review of Books* as “The Last Intellectual,” though in a venue where Sontag would not likely have been asked to defer her own desire.

And then there are all those translations to account for, where the familiar (Sontagian) title is defamiliarized by linguistic or graphic shift— hence *The Benefactor* is replicated (differently, deliciously) as *Välgöraren* or *Death Kit* as *Derniers recours*; hence “Against Interpretation” becomes “Imod fortolkning,” or *Against Interpretation* is overwritten, alternatively, as *L’oeuvre parle* or *Kunst und Antikunst*; hence *The Volcano Lover* reiterates as *Der Liebhaber des Vulkans*. (And so on.) For that matter, Sontag’s reviewers and critics are prone to repeat Sontag’s titles in their own: “On Susan Sontag,” “Radical Styles,” “For Interpretation—Notes Against Camp,” “Après Moi, etcetera,” “On the On of On Photography,” and so on.

I mark these textual differences for the purpose of rewriting my own twice-written title, unpacking its implications as they anticipate the substance and structure of these “introductory” remarks. I too am engaged in a process of reiteration, of tracing. My double title points in at least two directions: toward Sontag’s fiction, in that the first title/heading borrows its phrasing from one of

Sontag's most honored and extraordinary short stories, and toward Sontag's philosophically canted criticism, in that my second title/heading obviously alludes to the essay that first brought Sontag to national attention, her "Notes on 'Camp.'" That my titles evidence some awkwardness of fit in relationship to the material they cover is only one of many complexities on view.

A title I am not using is "Susan Sontag: Writing Herself." That locution also bears unpacking, interpretation. The essay it imagines would have linked Sontag to Roland Barthes, by playing on her essay depicting Barthes as the exemplary modern writer, for whom life and writing seem as if indistinguishable. It would have evoked Barthes's practice of treating the writerly self as a fictional character, as a pronoun, as both distinct from and finally all that remains of the body that writes; once the death kit is assembled, the writer becomes an *oeuvre*, a "body" of work.<sup>2</sup> A body of work may become, among other things, a bibliography, a list of titles. That list of titles is what I am supposed to introduce. But the list is so long and I have lived with it through so many years that I find myself, like Sontag herself, seeking disburdenment, debriefing. "Susan Sontag: Writing Herself would have taken a long time to write, would have been obliged to tell the life-story that went with the bibliography's book-story. It would have told of her peripatetic childhood and her all-female family, of her discovery of the Modern Library in a Tucson stationery store, of her move to southern California once her mother had remarried, of her early and uncannily mature efforts as a reviewer and essayist and editor of North Hollywood High's student newspaper, of her discovery of *Partisan Review* at a newsstand on the corner of Hollywood and Highland, of her matriculation at the University of California at Berkeley and her transfer to the University of Chicago and her almost instantaneous marriage to Philip Rieff and her subsequent graduation and academic experiences at Brandeis and Harvard and Oxford and the Sorbonne, of her divorce and her single-parenthood in New York City and her teaching at Columbia and the publication of *The Benefactor*. (And so on.)

I have already told that story once—in the "Chronology" appended to *Conversations with Susan Sontag*.<sup>3</sup> Other versions of that story are readily available—in the critical studies of Sontag by Sohnya Sayres and Liam Kennedy. Yet other tellings of the Sontag story are forthcoming—among them, to judge by its first chapter, Sontag's own *In America*.<sup>4</sup> So I have decided to avoid the life-story, for the most part. Likewise, I have decided to let the bibliography speak for itself in telling the book-story. The following remarks, accordingly, are devoted chiefly to the current "Sontag" discourse, much of which exists beyond the research parameters of the bibliography proper.

Two trends in contemporary Sontag scholarship are attention worthy, hence my title. One of these involves the remarkable—if not exactly surprising—degree to which "Notes on 'Camp'" has recovered its status as Sontag's most cited and contested essay. In the past six years, two books have appeared on the politics of Camp, not to mention a string of significant critical articles. The impetus here, clearly, is the arrival of Gay and Lesbian Studies (and/or Queer

Theory) as academic specialties, and the life-or-death significance that more than a decade's experience with AIDS has imputed to the struggle of homosexual people to assert their civil and human rights, among them the right to expect timely medical research and treatment. In heading this section "The Way She Writes Now," then, I am invoking Sontag's short story about AIDS as betokening her complex relationship to gay, especially gay male, culture. And I am evoking as well the Barthesian notion that a truly valuable text is always being written, is written again in being put to use. Though Sontag's cultural contributions are many, though how they will be taken up in subsequent eras is perforce uncertain, there is no doubt that "Notes on 'Camp'" has lately been rewritten in ways that are already making cultural and gender-political difference.

A less emphatic but in some ways equally interesting trend has been toward summary characterizations of Sontag's hard-to-describe career. Of course, her cultural timeliness in general has given almost everything written about her an oddly retrospective cast, something predicted from the beginning, as it were, in the opening lines of *The Benefactor*: "If only I could explain to you how changed I am since those days! Changed yet still the same, but now I can view my old preoccupations with a calm eye" (1). Some of these backward glances are cast by Sontag herself—in a new Afterword for *Death Kit*, in a new Foreword to *Against Interpretation*, in the operatic crescendos of the artistic and erotic, the ruminative and the acquisitive, the pornographically brutal and the ascetically poignant, that mark the various movements of *The Volcano Lover*, and especially its closing series of beyond-the-grave arias, the last of them sung (as it were) by a woman writer and political activist whose life-story is the echo of Sontag's own, as numerous reviewers have (variously) observed.<sup>5</sup>

Some of these retrospective pieces are listed in [Section H](#) of the bibliography, several of them addressing the question of Sontag's curious status as a postmodern modernist, as the end of an era. Others are more newly published and take the opportunity provided by *The Volcano Lover* to address the question of Sontag's relationship to feminism, and feminism's to modernism. But chiefly here I want to address and assess Liam Kennedy's *Susan Sontag: Mind as Passion*, as offering the most fully worked-out picture of Sontag's project and accomplishments currently available.<sup>6</sup> Though I imagine most readers of the present volume will be surprised at the great productivity of Sontag's later career quite apart from *The Volcano Lover*, much of which Kennedy barely touches upon, Kennedy has clearly worked harder than most to see Sontag's career in its entirety, in long shot. Some such long-term perspective will most probably be useful when confronting the Susan Sontag on view in the bibliography proper, which stands as an extreme instance of pastiche or collage, for being, quite literally and at great length, a list, an inventory, annotations.

Indeed, the following remarks are obviously written by a bibliographer rather than a biographer. I have *not* undertaken to provide a "master narrative" account of Sontag's career or reception. Instead, I tell a number of smaller stories, organized around the topics of Camp and modernism. In "The Way She Writes

Now” I talk about rhetoric, politics, gender, homophobia, sexuality, sensibility, morality, and aesthetics. In “Notes on ‘Sontag’” I discuss morbidity, modernity, authorship, duplication, supplementarity, melancholia, ambivalence, *écriture féminine*, recycling, storytelling, and baseball. Arguments are occasionally advanced and engaged; more typically, different pictures of Sontag are juxtaposed for the purpose of raising or refining a trope or topos. There *is* a picture of Sontag on view here. I hope it has some general applicability, some use. But its development, if linear, is not exactly narrative; it’s more textual, a weave of variously different threads shuttled back and forth across my topical warp, yielding finally, through the course and press of time, a pattern, a figure, a Sontag.

### THE WAY SHE WRITES NOW

There is hardly a time when Sontag did not court rhetorical controversy, contradiction, paradox—in providing an interpretation of history in support of her claims “Against Interpretation,” in (metaphorically) evoking a history of metaphors to urge the renunciation of metaphor. Several of Sontag’s most perspicacious readers have devoted sustained attention to her rhetorical procedures: Gary Nelson, whom I will discuss presently, but also Sohnya Sayres, whose analyses of Sontag’s predilections for epigrams yield fascinating insights into the delicate balance, as between affirmation and negation, assertion and silence, that epigrams may embody. But a crucial strain of the current Sontag discourse has found Sontag’s rhetoric as much a cause for question as celebration.

I have in mind discussions about the relations of language and politics purportedly implicit in various of Sontag’s essayistic formulations. An example from the mid-1980s is the essay “Aesthetics and Foreign Policy,” by Laura Kipnis. Kipnis uses a “Trip to Havana” (and its after-math) to question the logics by which left intellectuals express doubts as to whether Cuban “culture” is really “Culture.” The doubt speaks chiefly from an avant-gardist aesthetic position where individual agency is assigned a dissident or negationary task; that position assumes (per Kipnis) “an imaginary state beyond ideology” from which to speak, thus allowing aesthetics to be a “site on which foreign policy...becomes assimilated to subjectivity” (90).

Though Kipnis is chiefly interested in “the Descartes-Kant axis” of Enlightenment aesthetic discourse, she draws some of her examples of (negatively) aesthetic understanding from Sontag, whose remarks on Cuban culture in “Some Thoughts on the Right Way (for Us) to Love the Cuban Revolution” are taken as premonitory of her 1982 Town Hall address. Where Sontag circa 1968 ponders the remnants of “spic taste” and “Miami rhinestone chic” in post-revolutionary Cuba as prompting revulsion on the part of visiting American radicals, for whom (in Sontag’s view) American cultural “vulgarity” is offensively continuous with its imperialist foreign policy, Kipnis notes the

primacy granted to aesthetic (and class) criteria and the fragility of Sontag's street-lingo irony, which depends too much on her leftist credentials to survive her subsequent *mea culpas*. Indeed, per Kipnis, Sontag's call for an "erotics" of art in lieu of hermeneutics expresses "a desire to separate experience from knowledge," "to objectify taste," which Kipnis likens to the "aestheticization of politics" decried by Walter Benjamin (97).

Similar interpretations—involving large-scale claims based on micro-rhetorical analyses of Sontag's essayistic vocabularies—are found more recently as well. Thus in "'Femininity' and the Intellectual in Sontag and Cixous" (1990), Susan Wiseman adduces Cixous's (problematic) ruminations on the persistence of the man/woman gender hierarchy to map Sontag's (equally problematic) efforts to "erase gender" from the category of "the intellectual." Per Wiseman, Sontag casts the modernist writer as a martyred "other to the 'liberal bourgeois' society" (102) while avowing, as well, that the language in which such otherness is enacted is "contaminated," such that the moral (Utopian) "transcendence" of writing by writing is endlessly deferred, hence Sontag's subsequent description of writers as "guardians of language" (103) against the insults of popular televisual culture, and her (confessional) tactic (in "Trip to Hanoi") of using "alienation" (even *from* alienation) as betokening "authenticity" (105). The self-confirming circularity by which alienation yields more alienation thus risks collapse of the opposition of alienation and normalcy that inaugurated the discourse.

An uncannily similar picture of Sontag is on view in Uzoma Esonwanne's "Feminist Theory and the Discourse of Colonialism" (1993), where Sontag is again paired with Cixous, again for the purpose of describing and assessing "tropes of otherness" (233). Esonwanne thus critiques Cixous's reappropriation of "colonialist" tropes of "Africa" and "blackness" for feminist purposes; she critiques Sontag's description of women as a "Third World" along similar lines. Both writers make metaphor of metaphor, and risk repressing the history behind those metaphors (Africa's "darkness" is more properly European blindness; Latin American "thirdness" follows from imperialist/capitalist "firstness") and risk collapsing the heterogeneity of women and oppressions as well. Indeed, by reducing "imperialism and the problems of male dominance" alike to "the problem of sexuality" via the imperialism/sexism analogy (247), Sontag effectively "erases the sexual component of imperialism" (248), that is, the way imperialism *itself* employs sexuality (à la Cixous's "woman as 'Dark Continent'" formula) as a trope for conquest and possession.

There is mimicry beyond mere quotation in these various gender-political assessments of Sontag's rhetoric. It is described as (in some ways) unconscious, as self-canceling, as unusually risky and unstable, as if Sontag were asking language to do too much, to bear too great a burden. Criticism *of* such tropes can only repeat that risk. My willingness to grant Sontag her rhetorical occasions extends perforce to her critics. Taking risks makes writers vulnerable, but also useful. When "use" is the question, however, answers as to value are necessarily tentative. Yet there are moments when use drifts in the direction of misuse.

I have Wiseman in mind here, whose desire to align Sontag and Cixous requires the gendering of Sontag's modernism. Of course, Sontag's criticism rarely emphasizes women writers, a fact that many find problematic. Wiseman's solution is to import language from interviews into her analysis of Sontag's rhetorical repertoire—which can be done because Sontag is often asked about her links to feminism and her experience as a woman writer who began her career at a time when work-world sexual segregation was rampant, both within and outside academia. Per Wiseman, in her responses to such questions, Sontag seems “quite happy to operate with an unquestioned notion of ‘separate spheres’—the academic, rational ‘world of men’ and the domestic ‘world of women’ which a woman must transcend in order to assume status as, for instance, an intellectual” (100).

One *use* Wiseman makes of this binarism is especially interesting, in noting that the gender barrier demarcating women from intellectuals serves to protect *for* male intellectuals their capacity “to *talk passionately* about ideas” (101), as if passionate speech were really (after all) a female prerogative—a point confirmed, in Wiseman's view, by the reception of Sontag's Town Hall address, where accusations of fashion-following reveal the feminine as rationality's repressed. But the allegation that Sontag “erases gender”—apart from its obvious falsehood when applied to Sontag's fiction—is obviously ill served by allowing the interviewer's question-framing language to stand as and for Sontag's, especially so when one of the two interviews adduced features a lengthy discussion of the injustice of the separate spheres arrangement and of the demeaning practice of nominating some authors as “women writers.”

Such discussions of Sontag's “gender” rhetorics are obviously pertinent to her “Notes on ‘Camp’” and to its variously canted receptions; themes developed above, the relation of hermeneutics to aesthetics, say, or between the critical and the personal, recur below. There are some aspects of the contemporary discourse on Camp, however, that I wish to set aside, as impertinent to my desire, finally, to reread Sontag's essay, however vital they may be to gay political progress. That is, I see no point in disputing claims to the effect that, *contra* Sontag, Camp *is* political, *is* oppositional, *is* gay-specific. These claims have been disputed, but such stipulative definitions are so clearly performatives as to be, almost literally, beyond assessment, at least for the present, until the work they seek to do is done, until Camp, in this stipulative sense as a counter-hegemonic gay discourse, has no political purchase.<sup>7</sup> For the present, Sontag is obviously serving as a figure of (for) established wisdom. Whether Sontag's essay (or her practice more generally) fits the description routinely employed in these stipulations is, on the other hand, a good question—to which I will return. At least part of the contemporary discourse on Camp, however, focuses less on Sontag's claims *about* Camp than on her motives for making them, at which point we return to the question of style, of rhetoric.

This is certainly where D.A. Miller starts his profoundly negative appraisal of *AIDS and Its Metaphors*, though (like Wiseman) he begins by importing

interview comments to establish the grounds of his criticism, to the effect that Sontag's insistence that her book is less a scientific than a literary appraisal of AIDS—in which literary “form” or “performance” (on Miller's description) takes precedence over the merely occasional “content” or subject, as it does in M.F.K.Fisher's culinary writing—amounts to “AIDS panic in its looniest form to date” (92). Miller's purpose, finally, is to rescue the military metaphor for use by AIDS activists from Sontag's attempt to retire it, in which effort he has much admirable and thoughtful company. It is more to the present point, however, that Miller also adduces Sontag's “Notes on ‘Camp’” as prefiguring “the *attitude of her writing*” in its address to questions of homosexuality. Though she acknowledges “the gay lineage of Camp, she proceeds to deny it any necessity” by suggesting that, had gays not invented Camp, “someone else” would have (92–3). This amounts to a “phobic de-homosexualization of Camp,” on Miller's account, which phobia he also takes to characterize *AIDS and Its Metaphors*, to which he devotes the remainder of “Sontag's Urbanity.”

It's exactly with Miller's beginning move (“D.A.Miller begins...”) that Marcie Frank begins “The Critic as Performance Artist: Susan Sontag's Writing and Gay Cultures” (1993); and it is the “camp” notion itself that serves, in Frank's view, as “the linchpin in Sontag's shift [of trope] from sensibility to ideology” (175). At stake in this latter claim, we should note, is that the “shift” plays out, in retrospect, via the return to the topic of Camp at the end of “Fascinating Fascism,” where Sontag expresses serious reservations about the camp appropriation of Nazi regalia as a gay turn-on.

Like Miller, Frank writes tropically, and about tropes. I find Frank harder to follow, but I take her argument to involve a link between “literary performance” and “camp performance.” Unclear is the *general* role of “sensibility” in this formulation, though in writing her description of Camp *as a sensibility* Sontag is, per Frank, “performing” that sensibility, however “ambivalently.” On Frank's account, Sontag fears an “inferior” performance, as if Camp itself “carries with it no guarantee of aesthetic excellence,” in which case Sontag's subsequent career is read as “trying to supply the missing guarantee” (175). Also in train are claims that Sontag sees (yet disavows) a “special relation between gayness or gay culture and performativity” (175), that the latter follows from her (mis)appropriation of Oscar Wilde as the (literal) intertext of “Notes on ‘Camp,’” that she fails to fully embrace the Wildean maxim that criticism is autobiography and that this failure is troped by her acknowledgment that “To talk about Camp is therefore to betray it” (275), a betrayal understood, in turn, by reference to Sontag's claim that a wholehearted embrace of a sensibility allows one only to “exhibit it,” on the logic that only some distance or difference (Sontag's words for difference are “offended” and “revulsion”) allows description.

A crucial turn in Frank's telling of the story, where I will leave off summary and begin my own remarks, is the following declaration: Sontag “suggests that the acceptability of performance is a matter of degree: if an unspecified degree of involvement in a sensibility is necessary, ‘wholehearted sharing’ disables

analysis. Significantly, the terms she chooses to limit performance are moral: ‘no one who wholeheartedly shares in a given sensibility can analyze it; he can only, *whatever his intention*, exhibit it’ (emphasis added). Too much participation in a sensibility turns one into an inadvertent exhibitionist” (177). Frank goes on instantly to say that “betrayal and exhibition are overloaded terms,” though it is Frank far more than Sontag, I believe, who asks them to undergird her analysis, which goes several steps further than I have time or space to follow. But the linchpin of Frank’s argument, I want to say, is her elaboration of “exhibit” into “exhibitionist” and (thence) into “theatricality,” because it is Sontag’s rejection of “fascist aesthetics” that literally prefigures her criticism of fascist/camp sexuality as “a self-conscious form of theater.” And it is her own self-conscious performance that allows Sontag, per D.A. Miller and Frank both, to perform herself, hence to replace (to displace) Camp in what amounts to a homophobic gesture, a hostile takeover: “At its most extreme, Sontag’s writing involves the replacement of camp as a phenomenon by Susan Sontag herself” (182).

Clearly, the rhetorical progress I have described is tortured in the extreme. Some of that difficulty is attributable to Sontag. If describing a sensibility requires distance, how is it ever possible to describe or theorize one’s own sensibility, as Sontag repeatedly commits herself to doing? (With difficulty.) But far more of the strain, on my reading, is required by Frank’s conviction that expressing reservations about Camp or any practice associated with homosexuals amounts to homophobia. Frank accuses Sontag of moralizing; her own discourse is no less moralistic. Frank accuses Sontag of appropriation, of use; how is her use of Sontag any the less appropriative? Frank accuses Sontag of being antitheatrical, yet her own essay invokes the specter of mimetic falsification far more than Sontag’s. And nowhere does Frank acknowledge any possibility that women, for instance, might find aspects of Camp demeaning or hostile. As Kim Michasiw suggests, in assessing D.A. Miller’s attack on Sontag, there is more than enough phobia to go around here, not all of it Sontag’s. Indeed, Michasiw notes a rhetorical strain in Miller’s essay akin to the strain I have attributed to Frank’s elaboration of “antitheatricality” from “exhibit,” and it functions, shades of Cixous, by linking AIDS to Africa. Where Sontag describes gay men as “something like an ethnic group,” Miller reads her as invoking “the African ‘tribe,’” but the implication that gays are Darwinian primitives exists, per Michasiw, “only in Miller’s phobic fantasies.”<sup>8</sup>

To suggest that Miller and Frank are accountable for their readings of Sontag is not to say much. Their imputing of motive to Sontag follows less from biography than from effect; *because* her texts “erase” or overwrite homosexuality, Sontag’s texts (at least) are “homophobic.” Because this (textual) accusation echoes similar allegations previously discussed, it might be well to observe some of the complexities of Sontag’s published remarks on sexuality and gender.

We might observe, for example, that Sontag’s reputation for hedonism was never well deserved. “Against Interpretation” calls, most famously, not for “sex”

or “erotomania” but for “an erotics *of art*” (my emphasis; 14). To be sure, within the realm of art, she has defended the depiction of alternative or minority sexualities, in Genet’s novels and plays, in Jack Smith’s *Flaming Creatures*, in the art-pornography of “Pauline Réage” and Georges Bataille. And she has championed any number of important gay and lesbian writers and artists, if for their artistry rather than their sexual loyalties: Virginia Woolf, Gertrude Stein, Djuna Barnes, Jean Cocteau, William Burroughs, Francis Bacon, Werner Rainer Fassbinder, Roland Barthes, among others.

But Sontag’s picture of sexuality, even (especially) in “The Porno-graphic Imagination,” is not unequivocally positive. She writes: “Human sexuality is, quite apart from Christian repressions, a highly questionable phenomenon.... Tamed as it may be, sexuality remains one of the demonic forces in human consciousness—pushing us at intervals close to taboo and dangerous desires, which range from the impulse to commit sudden arbitrary violence upon another person to the voluptuous yearning for the extinction of one’s consciousness, for death itself (57). Sontag’s own fiction, we might note, confirms this view of sexuality as psychic trauma, as emotional cannibalism, as mechanistic exercise—and regardless of the sexual practices and predilections of the characters, which are often explicitly homosexual (I’m thinking of Jean-Jacques in *The Benefactor*; of William Beckford in *The Volcano Lover*, Emma Hamilton, too, eventually; not to mention the gay characters depicted in “The Way We Live Now”).

In which light, then, we might be wise to acknowledge Sontag’s view of sexuality as no less paradoxical than any number of her other positions. She can see sex as profoundly brutal and dangerous, as she does in “The Pornographic Imagination” and “Fascinating Fascism” and, for that matter, in “American Spirits” (Mr. Obscenity and Miss Flatface!) and *The Volcano Lover*. But there is also a more Utopian picture of sexuality available in Sontag, though it does involve a kind of erasure. I have in mind Sontag’s recurrent arguments in favor of androgyny, as antidote to the overly polarized picture of sexuality generally on view within late-stage capitalist culture.

A most intriguing instance of androgyny in action is Sontag’s short story “Old Complaints Revisited,” where the narrator, the narrator’s spouse, and the narrator’s lover all have ambi-sexual names, for the explicit purpose of deconstructing the interpretive routines that gender provides for and depends upon, allegorizing men as “representative,” demeaning women as “merely ‘feminine’” (126–7). But most of Sontag’s remarks on the topic are made during interviews, often in connection with or proximity to discussions of “Notes on ‘Camp.’”

A crucial instance, one referring as well to “The Third World of Women,” occurs in a discussion with Chuck Ortleb, where Sontag expresses the hope that sex roles will “become less polarized” (33), that homosexuality will accordingly “evolve” in the direction of bisexuality, such that homosexual choices and experiences will be less political, more thoroughly erotic, though also less important. And sexuality carries its current ideological burden, in her view, due

to “cultural convention. It’s not so much that all people have these huge amounts of sexual energy, but that we—in our society—make a surplus investment of energy in sex, perhaps because we can’t put our energy creatively into many other activities” (34). (She makes a similar claim in “The Pornographic Imagination,” where she invokes “the traumatic failure of modern capitalist society to provide authentic outlets for the perennial human flair for high-temperature visionary obsessions” [70].)

So Sohnya Sayres is responding astutely when she expresses distress at Sontag’s *AIDS and Its Metaphors* descriptions of pre-AIDS sexual behaviors in terms “of sexual spending, of sexual speculation, of sexual inflation” (76). “Sexual spending, speculation, inflation, depression? Who is speaking here?” asks Sayres (145). But clearly it is consumer capitalism, at least for Sontag, that bears the blame. And what she blames it *for*, we should note, is its repression of androgyny *via* polarization. In an “androgynous society,” as Sontag describes it in “The Third World of Women,” “Homosexual choices will be as valid and respectable as heterosexual choices; both will grow out of a genuine bisexuality. (Exclusive homosexuality—which, like exclusive heterosexuality, is learned—would be much less common in a nonsexist society than it is at present.) But in such a society, sexuality will in another sense be less important than it is now—because sexual relations will no longer be hysterically craved as a substitute for genuine freedom and for so many other pleasures (intimacy, intensity, feeling of belonging, blasphemy) which this society frustrates” (189).

Figures of substitution or displacement are invoked here—though the extent to which Sontag’s own erotic life is under erasure in these displacements is uncertain. While numerous sources indicate that she has practiced the androgyny she preaches, Sontag has refused to comment upon the topic of her sexual affiliations when asked, for reasons writerly as well as personal (because “It is... too complex and it always ends up sounding so banal”).<sup>9</sup> I take Sontag’s reticence—despite her generous praise of the sexual candor of Paul Goodman in *Under the Sign of Saturn*—as of a piece with the contention that sexuality already carries too much cultural weight, however much her antagonists might wish her to carry more. A burden Sontag is obviously ambivalent about carrying is “Notes on ‘Camp’” itself, though I am increasingly of the view that the essay is central to her project and accomplishments. It is certainly a topic she returns to—under the “Camp” rubric itself or under the more general sign of “aestheticism”—almost obsessively. More to the point, the current discourse on Camp provides reason for seeing “Notes on ‘Camp’” as supplementary to both “Against Interpretation” and “On Style,” and vice versa.<sup>10</sup>

I have in mind Thomas A. King’s chapter (“Performing ‘Akimbo’: Queer Pride and Epistemological Prejudice”) in *The Politics and Poetics of Camp*. Though I can no more than note the irony involved in proposing a historical origin for a practice that routinely de-originate, often for the express purpose of calling originality or essentialism into question, I find King’s analysis of the politics of taste in Early Modern England most evocative. He does not exactly disagree with

Sontag's description (his words) "of the basic Camp maneuver as the blocking out or emptying a thing of its content" such that its surface or style can be reconfigured or transvalued via an alternative reading strategy, an alternative taste.<sup>11</sup> But he places that maneuver within a historical narrative in which aristocratic impassivity or nonchalance, once read as a performative sign of privilege and self-control, is itself revalued by a rising bourgeoisie as betokening falsehood, deception—by contrast with a "natural" or "inner" (bourgeois, Puritan) self best visible when the person in question is *not* performing, is being "himself." Part and parcel of this resignification is the reassignment of aristocratic manners and vices to (male) homosexuals, and "the development of hermeneutic criticism" tasked exactly to discover "content," "to read the real truth underlying the performances of others" (29).

King describes the method of this hermeneutic, it bears noting, as "ocularcentrism," which equates the arbitrary vanishing point of perspectivism with the "inner" truth of the person or subject on view, and describes Camp, accordingly, as "deferring" (rather than, per Sontag, "blocking") the truth, insisting upon its performativity as explicitly negating the newly dominant sexual and epistemological regime. I am less inclined than King to see "blocking" and "deferring" as distinct, to the extent that it is only the surface of appearance or behavior that *can* deflect the hermeneutic gaze, by drawing (in *that* sense "blocking") its attention. So what happens if we reread, in that sense "rewrite," "Notes on 'Camp'" *now*—what calls for our renewed attention?

Critics distressed by Sontag's treatment of Camp typically link her alleged "erasure" of Camp's gay-male inheritance with her second note, which, more by juxtaposition than argument, links the camp emphasis on style over content to the much-contested claim that "the Camp sensibility is disengaged, depoliticized—or at least apolitical" (277). History proves the "erasure of homosexuality" charge a weak one. The *Time* magazine article that hailed Sontag's entrance on the 1960s intellectual scene (see K7) hardly slighted the gay element of Camp; of the article's six paragraphs, only one avoids the question, and that the last, by which point "Camp" is clearly marked, via extended reference to Wilde and Genet, as gay-authored. And *Time*'s emphasis is not misplaced, in the sense that Sontag hardly writes *around* the topic; she writes *toward* it, in the sense that she addresses it in sustained fashion in the last pages of the essay, either directly (notes 50 through 53) or by implication, adducing Genet in note 54, or by equating Camp with "love" and "tenderness" in notes 56 and 57. Readers in doubt on this question are urged to consult the sources listed in Sections H and K of the bibliography proper. In many of these, the gay legacy of Camp comes under repeated commentary and attack, much of that directed *at* Sontag. That she makes a handy target for Camp's advocates only confirms her long-running role in Camp's cultural empowerment.

The question of Camp's political valence—in general, or for Sontag—is more complicated. I agree with Sohnya Sayres and Liam Kennedy that the primary *politique* of Sontag's early criticism is directed toward literary and philosophical

targets, toward a “liberal” or “humanist” universalism for which Lionel Trilling is often asked to stand. (Sontag once avowed that “Notes on ‘Camp’” was written *for* Trilling.)<sup>12</sup> I agree likewise that Sontag’s formalist temperament always stays at a crucial distance from the linguistic skepticism of some versions of structuralism. Indeed, her brief “Against Interpretation” can be taken exactly as a defense of experience against an imperialist interpretation that reduces “otherness” to “sameness” via “translation.” (The trauma of this strategy is figured in “Old Complaints Revisited,” where the nul-gendered narrator *is* a translator in the service of something akin to the *Partisan Review* “family,” which task and life s/he wants desperately to leave behind.) Sontag’s almost always distressed relationship to history is distressed partly because history is the only “immanence” that can oppose or counterbalance the supposed certainties of language; history is where change happens, becomes visible, though it is not always change for the better.

The politics on view in “Notes on ‘Camp’” are no less complicated. Though Sontag does describe Camp as “apolitical,” she also describes it as a “sensibility,” and sensibility is synonymous with “taste,” than which “Nothing is more decisive” because “taste governs every free—as opposed to rote—human response.” Indeed, sensibility is even more crucial than taste because sensibility “underlies and gives rise” to taste, is its condition of possibility. And this *against* the view that sensibility is “the realm of purely subjective preferences,” among them “sensual” preferences, not yet “brought under the sovereignty of reason” (276). In describing Camp *as* a sensibility, then, Sontag half implies a hope that rationality and sexuality are not always or necessarily antagonistic, that mind and body are not irredeemably at odds. Moreover, Camp’s exemplars on Sontag’s account include several figures of political weight or moment: Pope, Tennyson, Wilde, Genet. So what seems most difficult to grasp, in the context of “Notes on ‘Camp’” alone, is how we should connect the almost Kantian political-moral value Sontag assigns to *any* sensibility with her repeated emphasis on Camp’s “detachment,” its “artificiality” or “theatricality.”

An answer can be pieced together from Sontag’s remarks in “On Style” regarding the relationship between art and morality. Sontag has two kinds of morality in view, one of which, on implicitly Kantian grounds, does not count as moral, that is, those allegedly “moral” judgments that “are no more than a defense of limited social interests and class values” and that involve (I paraphrase) “blind and unreflective obedience” (25). Such judgments typically occur when the work of art is taken as statement, or as mimetic description, and when the statements or actions so depicted are judged by reference to a “particular morality.” But true morality involves “a code of acts,” involves “a standard for behaving toward...other human beings *generally*...as if we were inspired by love.” But since we do not really love everyone alike, “Morality is a *form* of acting and not a particular repertoire of choices” (24).

There are obscurities here, certainly, made even more so when “Spiritual Style in the Films of Robert Bresson” is brought into the business, as offering yet

another model of a “detached,” “reflective” sensibility. But on this picture, morality qua morality is always already theatrical, involves acting “as if.” Moreover, morality is a formal relation, not of one’s actions to a particular moral code, but of one’s acting in accord with the logic of Kant’s “categorical imperative,” upon which Sontag has clearly modeled her own discussion. “Freedom” is exactly the freedom to choose whether one wills to act, and to act in a way that one would will *for everyone*, categorically, so that you would have others do thusly unto you under similar circumstances.<sup>13</sup> Such literally self-reflexive judgments require an ability to “bracket” one’s actions, even to “block” them. Art *can* nourish this capacity because “the knowledge we gain through art is an experience of the form or style of knowing something, rather than a knowledge of something (like a fact or a moral judgment) in itself” (22).

Under this description, morality itself is effectively a species of Camp, of self-reflective double vision. Camp can serve as “a solvent of morality” (290) because it reveals the form of moral thinking, though perhaps it does so at yet one additional degree of artifice or remove from “particular” moral standards than do the other sensibilities Sontag describes. Camp, she writes, is “the sensibility of failed seriousness” (287). But “seriousness,” in these precincts, comes near to being a “particular” moral standard, the one associated with “high culture,” with “development of character” in the novelistic or realistic sense, toward which Sontag has always been skeptical, even as a novelist. Camp thus “denaturalizes” by “playing” with character, ideas, morality, politics.

Sontag’s “Fascinating Fascism” skepticism may well follow from the thought that “Nazi Camp” is not playful enough, is exactly a “particular” morality in its search *for* a particular content. Though she describes “the fad for Nazi regalia” in terms of theatricality, of taste, of choice, she also invokes something we might call “content” as its aim; its adepts are seeking “a reserve of sexual energy [that] can be tapped” (104). Moreover, she reads this longing as evincing a social pathology. It does not enact or evoke the individual’s personal case history but invokes, instead, a mass-art memory, almost as a reaction to “an oppressive freedom of choice in sex,” the oppressiveness of which she clearly links to consumer affluence, as if “choice” in the Kantian sense were exactly lacking, quite apart from the master/slave scenarios of sadomasochism (104). I take Sontag’s wish that Camp had remained “a minority or adversary taste” (98) to indicate that it was always, for her, a form of political engagement, however indirectly, an engagement that the link with Nazism both co-opts and obscures.

Given the many Kantian echoes in these last few paragraphs, we might well observe one last charge that has been urged against Sontag’s view of Camp, though it echoes the Laura Kipnis allegation that Sontag’s anti-hermeneutic aesthetic seeks “to objectify taste.” I have in mind the claim, initiated by Gregory Bredbeck and elaborated by Moe Meyer, to the effect that Sontag’s attempt to describe Camp proceeds by Aristotelian “division and classification.” For Bredbeck, this is a nominalist or universalizing strategy, allowing Camp to function “as all parts of speech, all parts of a sentence: verb, noun, adjective,

adverb; subject, object, modifier” (276). Meyer calls this (drawing terms from Terry Lovell) an “objectivist” methodology, positing “a real world” to which a “knowing subject” has access “through sense-experience,” which has the effect, in the case of social behaviors like Camp, of reducing human actors to “‘thinglike’ status” and risks “the erasure of gay and lesbian subjects through an antidialogic turn that fails to acknowledge a possibly different ontology embodied in queer signifying practices” (9).

As it happens, Sontag addresses a version of this charge in “On Style,” which overtly continues the effort begun in “Notes on ‘Camp’” to elaborate the relationship between aesthetics and morality. Here Sontag adduces Ortega y Gasset’s “dehumanization” of art and criticizes the one-sidedness of his insistence that (in her words) “the work of art [is] a certain kind of object” that we experience at “a certain distance from the lived reality which is represented” (30). Of course, in trying to collapse the style/content distinction, Sontag works to describe and measure exactly that distance, as a way of forestalling the reduction of art to content via standing models of “depth” interpretation, mainly the Marxian and Freudian, which do provide a “content” and with it a “particular” morality. Sontag strives to acknowledge a difference between aesthetic and moral judgments that still allows for both and respects the sensible immediacy of the aesthetic encounter.<sup>14</sup>

Though I have not the time nor the learning to propose a thorough exposition of the claim, I suggest that one way Sontag has of providing a nonparticular justification of art works is by means of a *formal* analogy between art objects and world objects, or perhaps between critical statements and moral judgments. We see both moves in the following passage from “On Style”: “An approach which considers works of art as living, autonomous models of consciousness will seem objectionable only so long as we refuse to surrender the shallow distinction of form and content. For the sense in which a work of art has no content is no different from the sense in which the world has no content. Both are. Both need no justification; nor could they possibly have any” (27).

There is a utopian echo in this language I would urge Sontag’s critics to listen for, of a world where “being” is, at it were, self-justifying, transcendently, in which all individuals are universally understood as “ends in themselves,” as citizens in Kant’s “Kingdom of Ends.” Alternatively, we could say that art works are “models of consciousness,” purposive yet without immediate purpose in the Kantian formula, which provide occasions, like the objects in nature that provide Kant his primary examples of aesthetic experience, for arriving at reflective “aesthetic judgments,” judgments that have, for “content,” only the immediate experience of the work or object, but take the form of quasi-universal claims: “This is beautiful.” “Objectivity,” in this formulation, does not lead to dogma or inhumanity. Rather, it leads, as Tobin Siebers has argued in “Kant and the Politics of Beauty,” to dialogic interactions in which affective descriptions of otherness are offered as reasonable justifications for the judgments so rendered, though, unlike moral judgments, their “universality” is *always* and exactly the

question, and is never settled, and is always asked and disputed by repeated reference to the object of attention and to other participants in the conversation.<sup>15</sup> In being “Against Interpretation,” Sontag doubtless overstates the case against the cognitive elements of perception itself. But it is hard to imagine a more ambitious and hopeful manifesto on behalf of the renewability of the human through art than “Against Interpretation” and its companion pieces, “Notes on ‘Camp’” and “On Style” especially. Indeed, while *against* “interpretation,” Sontag is clearly *for* criticism, and exactly in its descriptive capacities, in its attention to form and style.

But, of course, art is not our only hope, at least not among politicized intellectuals, except to the extent that political thought and action alike draw nourishment from the aesthetic, as Sontag repeatedly avows they do. Critics of Sontag’s view of Camp have a point when they say that Camp, on Sontag’s description, is “objectified,” because Sontag’s view focuses intently on the reception side of the sensibility. It is a taste, a way of looking, a property of objects and people. Indeed, when it comes to the doing side, “to camp” as an infinitive verb, Camp is troubled by an aura of vulgarity and seductiveness, by the conviction that “deliberate” Camp is a lesser form than its “pure” or “innocent” counterpart, by the conviction that “failure” is a form of camp success, and so on. Only in the later “Notes” (34 and following) does agency enter in, under the rubric of “Style,” in the figures of Wilde and Genet and “the dandy.” If the goal of contemporary theorists of Camp is to authorize an explicitly activist Camp discourse, then some measure of frustration is likely to attend their reading of the early portions of the essay. Given the essay’s progress, however, and the subsequent progress of Sontag’s career into periods of political activism and into more overtly political writing projects (in *Trip to Hanoi*, *On Photography* and *AIDS and Its Metaphors*), we may finally have reason for agreeing with Liam Kennedy that what Sontag was “offended by” in Camp was less its vulgarity than the very detachment her critics find repelling—a “detachment” that, in Kennedy’s words, “posits so extreme a neutrality of feeling and so flattens the ethical landscape that she must express her ambivalence” (35).

### NOTES ON “SONTAG”

In “The Deaths of Camp,” Caryl Flinn adduces, among other evidence of Camp’s links with various “declines, lapses, and losses,” Sontag’s recollection that, in seeking a sensibility to describe, Camp was her second choice...after “Morbidity.” So “Notes on ‘Camp’” began as “Notes on ‘Death.’”<sup>16</sup> Few among Sontag’s more loyal readers would likely be surprised. Death and something like resurrection have long been on Sontag’s agenda. Frau Anders dies and is reborn (or so it seems) in *The Benefactor*; we see a similar demise and revival—of another wife, Francesca—in *Duet for Cannibals*. *Death Kit* doubles this perplexity, in depicting a murder that seems not to have happened in a story that does not really take place...except in the mind of a suicide. Suicide is also at the

heart of “Debriefing” and *Brother Carl*. *Alice in Bed* depicts the “eagerly posthumous” (105) Alice James who, though she finally dies of cancer, famously asked for and was granted paternal permission to kill herself. An “Imagination of Disaster” certainly haunts Sontag’s writerly project. And in her essays no less than her fiction. In recent years, especially, Sontag has written a number of memorial tributes—to Donald Barthelme, to Danilo Kiš, to Joseph Brodsky—that we can place in a line of similar essays marking the passing of, among others, Paul Goodman and Roland Barthes. Other of Sontag’s more discursive projects treat death and dying as primary themes: *Illness as Metaphor* and *AIDS and Its Metaphors* most emphatically, but *On Photography* as well.

In her essay on Syberberg’s *Hitler*, Sontag connects Syberberg’s penchant for hyperbolic “repetition and recycling” to Freud’s essay on “Mourning and Melancholia”—a linkage that also ties Syberberg to Wagner, to Mann, and to Benjamin, though Syberberg lacks “the ambivalence, the slowness, the complexity, the tension of the Saturnine temperament.” Indeed, Syberberg uses “the distinctive tools of the melancholic,” but only to do “the work of mourning” (164). Freud himself, it bears noting, links melancholia to obsession, to ambivalence, and to intelligence. While the mourner and the melancholic are alike in their withdrawal and enervation due to trauma, the mourner detaches from the lost love-object “bit by bit,” each memory and hope hypercathected and let go of, a process that eventually ends, the world and health returned to.<sup>17</sup> By contrast, the melancholic does not work through grief, and typically exhibits a “fall in his self-esteem” (127). As Freud tells the story, this self-reproach typically follows from introjection of the missing object, a matter of ego identification, wherein ambivalence or anger toward the lost object is unconsciously displaced, becomes moralistic self-criticism. And with that self-criticism, significantly, comes “a keener eye for the truth” (128) and “insistent talking” (129). In Sontag’s words, “Precisely because the melancholy character is haunted by death, it is melancholics who best know how to read the world” (*USS* 120).

Though Sontag has discussed melancholia at length—in her essays on Benjamin and Syberberg, in *Illness as Metaphor* also—one of her most pertinent essays, for my purposes, for combining both her aesthetic and analytical sensibilities, is Sontag’s “Fragments of an Aesthetic of Melancholy.” It introduces “*Veruschka*”: *Trans-figurations*, a book of photos of Vera Lehdorff taken by Holger Trülzsch. Except in this case, the famous fashion model (she appeared as a model in Antonioni’s *Blow-Up*) is unclothed, and is as much the artist as her photographer-partner, in that they collaborated in painting her body to mimic, to blend into, decaying factories, rural architecture, various nature-scapes, and so on. But “*Veruschka*” mimes as well various elaborately “clothed” figures (both male and female) from Hollywood and/or popular, thus Camp, culture—Marilyn Monroe, Rita Hayworth, any number of gangsters and dandies. In miming her subject’s mimicry, Sontag’s essay resists easy summary; its pertinence in the present context is at least visible in the following passage,

which avows that the Lehndorff/Trülzsch photos *are* melancholy because they evidence desire: “The desire to be stripped down; to be naked; to be concealed; to disappear; to be only one’s skin, to mortify the skin; to petrify the body; to become fixed; to become dematerialized, a ghost; to become matter only, inorganic matter; to stop; to die” (6).

I gather these variously ghostly threads for several reasons. One is an argument recently advanced to the effect that melancholy amounts to a specifically feminine form of modernism, to which prospect I will return. I am also working to keep the thread of Camp visible in the weave of these remarks. But I am chiefly moved to consider Sontag’s status as an elegist by a late rereading of Sohnya Sayres’s *Susan Sontag: The Elegiac Modernist* and Liam Kennedy’s *Susan Sontag: Mind as Passion*. Of course, *any* retrospective account of a life as rich and productive as Sontag’s is likely to suggest a trajectory, a telos. And every book must end, conclude. Sontag addresses a similar point in “Afterlives: The Case of Machado de Assis,” in remarking that “a biography that means to be definitive must wait until after the death of its subject” (102). We might as readily invoke the converse, that any biographical account runs the risk of killing its subject, by revealing an itinerary of sameness that is tantamount to stasis. Or, as Larissa MacFarquhar has made the point in reviewing the Kennedy book, by emphasizing Sontag’s models and influences instead of the influence she has exercised, her past rather than her future.<sup>18</sup>

To be sure, the describability of Sontag’s writerly past is exactly the issue; my immediate task is to provide a summary assessment of the Kennedy book, which exists beyond the purview of the bibliography proper and is likely to be the standard critical account for years to come. But the obligation is doubly haunted. Though Sayres and Kennedy differ considerably—differences I address presently—it is hard to shake the impression that they have written almost the same book, as if one were *The Benefactor* and the other were the notebook account, written in third rather than first person, of which Hippolyte provides a synopsis in the last chapter of that novel. (Readers can acquire some sense of this similitude by comparing our [Section I](#) descriptions of the Sayres and Kennedy dissertations—though both were thoroughly revised for publication.) A similar sense of *mise-en-abyme* is also evoked (I find) in reading Kennedy’s book and tropes the somewhat skeptical thoroughness with which he describes Sontag’s career. An important element in this thoroughness is Kennedy’s elegant discussion of *The Volcano Lover*, which I address below. But other features of Kennedy’s analysis exemplify the sense in which Kennedy’s “Sontag” evinces an uncanny measure of coherence, despite the many “Sontags” that the bibliography proper clearly documents.

A stellar instance of this thoroughness is the connection Kennedy adduces between *On Photography* and “Notes on ‘Camp.’” Sohnya Sayres speaks for many in saying that, with *On Photography*, “Sontag does an about-face on the defending wall she once erected around the arts” (107). By contrast, Kennedy claims that Sontag’s late 1970s ambivalence about “photographic seeing” is a

version of her early 1960s ambivalence about c.amp taste. “The key common element is aesthetic detachment,” writes Kennedy, whereby both photography and Camp display an “ability to simultaneously embrace and distance the world” (92). Kennedy goes on to *distinguish* photography from Camp, by rewriting the distinction as one between mass and elite culture (at which point photography’s role in the “fascination” of fascism, hence the massification of Camp, becomes all the more crucial), but I find myself equally inclined to recall other connections between the two Sontags evoked in Kennedy’s comparison: the way Sontag’s critique of photography as cutrate humanism echoes her *Against Interpretation* attack on the Matthew Arnold model of “moral journalism,” and the extent to which her deeply pessimistic *On Photography* critique of mass society is altogether continuous with the willfully optimistic picture of modern culture on view in “One Culture and the New Sensibility.”

Critics who see Sontag as an “Evangelist of the New” are likely to cite the closing sentence of “One Culture”: “From the vantage point of this new sensibility, the beauty of a machine or of the solution to a mathematical problem, of a painting by Jasper Johns, of a film by Jean-Luc Godard, and of the personalities and music of the Beatles is equally accessible” (304). Under Kennedy’s influence, I am more inclined to invoke her description of modernity’s rootedness “in extreme social and physical mobility; in the crowdedness of the human scene (both people and material commodities multiplying at a dizzying rate); in the availability of new sensations such as speed (physical speed, as in airplane travel; speed of images, as in the cinema); and in the pan-cultural perspective on the arts that is possible through the mass reproduction of art objects” (296). And then I am likely to remember the passage from “Against Interpretation” in which interpretation is likened to “the fumes of the automobiles and of heavy industry”; like industrial waste, interpretation “poisons our sensibilities,” creates a “shadow” world that “duplicates,” hence “depletes” and “impoverishes,” the real one (7).

Of course, in describing Sontag as critical of sensibilities that simultaneously “embrace” and “distance” the world, Kennedy is also describing Sontag as being implicitly (if also unconsciously) self-critical, and in terms uncannily akin to those of Sohnya Sayres. Both describe Sontag as committed to a view of authorship that is resolutely singular, autonomous, distanced from various forms of worldliness. Kennedy’s primary trope for this is “the Great Work,” as Sontag elaborates it in her discussion of Syberberg, but Kennedy clearly links this form of modernity to Sontag’s “unabashed celebration of the intellectual outsider and the over-reaching artist” (87).

It bears saying, in this context, that Sontag’s concept of “writing” is decidedly historical and—especially in view of “The Aesthetics of Silence” and “Thinking Against Oneself”—impersonal. Modern authors can be recognized, Sontag writes in “Approaching Artaud,” “by their effort to disestablish themselves, by their will not to be morally useful to the community, by their inclination to present themselves not as social critics but as seers, spiritual adventurers, social

pariahs.” Accordingly, modern writers do not produce autonomous “works.” Rather, writing becomes “a medium in which a singular personality heroically exposes itself,” though that exposure “does not require that the reader actually know a great deal about the author” (*USS* 15). In Artaud’s case, at least, the drama of self-victimization yields an Artaud who “remains fiercely out of reach, an unassimilable voice and presence” (*USS* 70).

Such accounts are numerous in Sontag’s oeuvre—and variously canted; her Simone Weil is *not* the same as her Cioran or her Barthes or her Kiš. What does remain constant in these descriptions, however, is the provision of a historical narrative in which writing has arrived at some late-stage or end-game circumstance whereby “being” a writer—being a “real” writer, of spiritual and philosophical ambition, rather than a moral journalist, say—means walking farther down a path already traced by exemplary predecessors, even at the risk of silence. It is an “insupportable burden” of “secular historical consciousness,” Sontag avows in “The Aesthetics of Silence,” that pushes artists, yearning for the absolute, for transcendence, to employ “strategies of impoverishment and reduction” (14) in their attempts “to out-talk language” (27). Per Kennedy, Sontag’s essay seeks to “demystify” these myths of absoluteness (48). Sontag’s account of “the myths of silence and emptiness”—as being myths “as nourishing and viable as might be devised” at a time when “‘unwholesome’ psychic states furnish the energies for most superior work in the arts” (11)—is certainly tinged with regret at a “devaluation of language” that is “no less profound” than that simultaneously suffered by images (21). “Yet,” she adds, “one can’t deny the pathos of these myths” (11).

The uncanny echo in these latter phrases, as Kennedy helps us hear it, involves the link between melancholia and pathos and the degree to which both themes are there in Sontag from near the beginning. Thus in discussing how writers working “Under the Sign of Saturn” habitually project themselves in and through their subjects—as Sontag assembles herself in her assemblage of exemplars—Kennedy adduces Sontag’s “The Anthropologist as Hero,” from 1963, where she reviews Lévi-Strauss’s *Tristes Tropiques* in terms very similar to those employed in her later essays. Burdened by “the inhuman acceleration of historical change,” writes Sontag, “Modern thought is pledged to a kind of applied Hegelianism: seeking its Self in its Other,” the other “experienced as a harsh purification of ‘self’” (69). *Tristes Tropiques* “is one of the great books of our century” (71) for being an “exemplary personal history in which a whole view of the human situation, an entire sensibility, is elaborated” (72). “[Submitting to the melancholy spectacle of the crumbling prehistoric past” encourages “anthropological doubt” (73), which requires, in turn, “the assumption of a profound detachment” (74). This “aloof and geometric formalism involves, in Lévi-Strauss no less than in Sarraute and Robbe-Grillet, a “mixture of pathos and coldness” (79). “The anthropologist is thus not only the mourner of the cold world of the primitives, but its custodian as well. Lamenting among the shadows,

struggling to distinguish the archaic from the pseudo-archaic, he acts out a heroic, diligent, and complex modern pessimism” (81).

So Kennedy’s Sontag, I am saying, is strikingly consistent in ways her critics are often unable to grasp, much less to grant. Part of that consistency involves her loyalty to an intellectual tradition that, paradoxically, prizes solitude, philosophical detachment, intellectual homelessness or exile. It is Kennedy’s claim, indeed, that this has been Sontag’s writerly persona from the beginning—to judge by her interviews and by “Pilgrimage,” in which Sontag recounts her late 1940s encounter with Thomas Mann. Sayres more or less agrees in this regard, we might note, though she sees Sontag’s Europhilia as a more important influence than that of the New York Intellectuals, whom Sontag discovered in the pages of *Partisan Review* at roughly the same time. Kennedy tilts the balance slightly in the opposite direction, crediting the examples of *Partisan Review* stalwarts like Edmund Wilson, Paul Goodman, Harold Rosenberg, and Lionel Trilling as providing the model of the independent “intellectual generalist” that Sontag eagerly adopted—a matter both of intellectual approach and writerly style—yet Kennedy also notes how thoroughly those writers were themselves already Europhiles, and observes as well how clearly, how pointedly, Sontag addressed her earliest essays, regardless of their European subject matter, to American audiences and cultural controversies.<sup>19</sup> Indeed, where many of Sontag’s *Partisan Review* models and mentors began as freelance cultural commentators and eventually drifted into academe, Sontag took the opposite tack, leaving the academy to become a self-supporting writer-intellectual. In that sense, her independence was as much a material as a mythic reality, and the myth, on Kennedy’s account, provided real protection in a world increasingly distrustful of intellectual amateurs, only slightly less so of intellectual women. In Kennedy’s words, “Sontag’s intellectual autonomy should be understood as a potent myth which *both* sustains the singular force and style of her work *and* contains this work within specific structures of cultural value” (15).

It is possible to read this “containment” negatively, as indicating the limits of Sontag’s project. The difference between Sayres and Kennedy can be addressed along these lines. That is, Kennedy’s view of Sontag is, as it were, very distanced, very third person, British in its sympathetic detachment from the agonies of Sontag’s most immediate cultural circumstances, which he seeks less to change than to understand, though limits he sees—in Sontag’s reluctance to “specify the politics of desire as a social experience” (53) in her analysis of pornography, in her failure to judge Syberberg’s romanticism by the same negative standards she evokes in her critique of Riefenstahl, in the naiveté of her hope that “the white magic of reason” would prevail in her Town Hall address (though Kennedy also offers a cogent refutation of the view that Sontag had suddenly gone neoconservative).

By contrast, Sayres is very first person, very American, writing from a position very near to Sontag’s, as literally in the same city or room or vocabulary. And what Sayres longs for is a more “theatrical” Sontag, one more given to

action than to rumination. In her Introduction, Sayres describes Sontag's picture of the modern writer as validating "a heroism of self that does not get tested in any arena of 'right'" (11). And in her discussion of *The Benefactor*, Sayres observes "that the element lacking in Hippolyte's self-regard is the sense of his theater. In the end he can accept that his life may be a novel, but he never knowingly plays it out. He substitutes a posture for a performance" (69).

It is worth remarking that this imputation of failed theatricality follows from an identification of Hippolyte as an anesthetized or disembodied Artaud—like Artaud in his "fanatical self-absorption" (70), also (perhaps) for being institutionalized—locked in dialogic struggle with a Genet-like writer/homosexual/boxer in the figure of Jean-Jacques. Though Hippolyte hardly suffers as Artaud did, Sayres encounters echoes and ironies enough—via the intrusions of Sontag's own epigrammatic voice—to read Hippolyte as Sontag's self-reflection, an image of a life lived posthumously, disburdened, of which Sontag herself seeks disburdenment. As Sayres puts the point, in reference to several of Sontag's early fictions, "She relinquishes the role of modernist artist to her characters in their peculiarly death-loving quandaries, so that she can then withdraw a little" (80). And this self-reflection, while revealing limits, also reveals their self-critical dimension, to the extent that the "wall" Sontag erects between art and life *can* be seen as protecting the latter rather than the former: "She is always buttressing the citadels of modernism," writes Sayres, but "to keep them from leaking into the present, spilling out their creeds into our lives" (55).

Cary Nelson's "Soliciting Self-Knowledge: The Rhetoric of Susan Sontag's Criticism" seems an apt and timely intertext here, in that it is Sontag's critical voice that cues Sayres to hear an ironic if muted self-description in Sontag's depiction of Hippolyte, in that "self-knowledge" necessarily involves a species of doubling, Hippolyte of Sontag, the self who solicits of the self who (always already) knows—knows something, apparently, the soliciting self does not (yet) know. In Nelson's article, of course, the soliciting self is the critic; the self solicited is typically another writer, often another critic. And Nelson adduces an "uneasiness" at the heart of this critical transaction, though it takes several forms. The soliciting critic may be distressed by the particularity of the target text, when some larger topic is really the motivation for writing. In Sontag's case, as Nelson elaborates, the larger topic is "silence" or "absence" or "mediacy," a silence Sontag seeks to "name," to mediate, though at considerable risk, a risk made bearable by adopting the "mask" or "persona" of the subject under analysis, a mimicry that both protects and enacts, deletes and expresses, the solicitous critical self. Indeed, Nelson describes Sontag's "rhetoric" as exemplary of criticism more generally in staging or modeling a "spirit" of "self-reflexive inquiry." "What distinguishes Sontag's work is her awareness of that spirit and her willingness either to deal with it directly or at least to keep in touch with it as she writes" (721).

From a poststructuralist vantage, being "in touch" through writing, through mediacy, evokes an additional paradox or two that I want to mark in passing.

Part of the value of Nelson's essay is that he describes Sontag's essays *as writing*, via the analysis of tropes. One such trope is distance itself, enacted most spectacularly, on Nelson's account, in Sontag's "Trip to Hanoi," where it is exactly Sontag's distance (in Hanoi) from America, her distance (in America) from Hanoi, that empowers her efforts to find a language adequate to her "radical" needs. Thus early on she declares herself an alien, as "too foreign.... I really understood nothing at all, except at a 'distance'" (SRW 211). Yet she eventually comes to see that Vietnam "can glow in the remote distance like a navigator's star" (SRW 271). "Distance" is thus transvalued, is not so much opposed as incorporated, spoken. One can thus both assert distance and embrace it. The only alternative, given writing's dependence on absence, on difference, is silence. (But then all writing is silent, distanced.) Indeed, on Nelson's account, part of what we might call the "Sontag effect" (my coinage) is the way "her efforts to invoke the presence of her subjects are so intense and precise" (715) that, in view of her general reluctance to quote, "the things she describes constitute in each case an informing absence at the core of her essays. To be convinced of her analysis of a work is to be led to yearn for what is not 'there' in her prose" (716).

Another valuable feature of Nelson's essay is the particular way he ascribes self-consciousness to Sontag and the way his description allows us finally to ponder the particular relation in her writing between its "conscious" and "unconscious" elements. Clearly the strongest element of Nelson's case is the way Sontag's essays repeat, thus echo, each other (thus "Trip to Hanoi" employs nearly the same tropes and value terms as "The Pornographic Imagination"). Another feature Nelson adduces is Sontag's stylistic irony, her liberal use of italics or quotation marks to "draw attention to some of the key words in her essays, reminding us that usage has partly ruined them and that they need to be redefined" (723). This amounts, in Nelson's view, to a declaration that "Everything in criticism is rhetoric" (723). The third claim Nelson makes on behalf of Sontag's self-consciousness—in my view the weakest—is the one he (and I) began with, the doubling of critic and critic, of Sontag with her subjects.

Sontag's authorship, that is, whether described by Sayres or Kennedy or Nelson, is remarkably coherent—uncannily so, I've contended. Nelson, if anything, is at a disadvantage on these accounts for having written before *Under the Sign of Saturn* was published. As many critics have noted, Sontag's descriptions of Goodman, Benjamin, et cetera in that book are very obviously self-descriptions, applying almost point for point to Sontag, though a different Sontag in each instance. It is hard to imagine that Sontag was not alert to this prospect, not in view of "Mind as Passion," which begins with a discussion of a speech Elias Canetti delivered to mark Hermann Broch's fiftieth birthday, in which Canetti's praise of Broch amounted to a catalogue of his own writerly aspirations, and established thereby "the terms of a succession" (181), terms Sontag herself, as a "noble admirer" (182), implicitly endorses and aspires to. One particular aspect of Sontag's admiring description of Canetti is worth citing,

as bringing these introductory remarks one important step closer to their proper end. Canetti, writes Sontag, fights the reductionist use of history, as he disavows the reductionist use of Freudian psychology. And this protest, on Sontag's account, is also "a protest against death" accomplished by tropes of interiority, incorporation: "Recurrent images of needing to feel everything inside himself, of unifying everything in one head, illustrate Canetti's attempts through magical thinking and moral clamorousness to 'refute' death" (201).

In describing Sontag's authorship I have necessarily described her relationship to modernism, if only because that is the relationship she herself invokes in these contexts, most famously in *Under the Sign of Saturn*. Only in the last few paragraphs have I evoked the specter of "postmodernism." I do so now because it allows me to raise the "duplication" question, or the "incorporation" question, in its most acute form— as a matter of "supplementarity." In describing postmodernism as a Lyotardian "Regime of Signification," Scott Lash distinguishes modern from postmodern by rewriting the distinction (I paraphrase) as between a "discursive" sensibility (privileging words, formal properties, reason, meaning, ego) and a "figural" one (privileging images, juxtapositions, anti-didacticism, "text acts," id). Lash takes the Sontag of *Against Interpretation* as exemplifying and theorizing the latter, advocating "a Nietzschean aesthetic" in which "art is an extension of or a 'supplement' to life" (315) as against "cultural conservatives" like Lionel Trilling. And the result of this "new sensibility" is a shift of emphasis from an "uptown" modernist "differentiation" to a "downtown" postmodernist "dedifferentiation" (317–8). Indeed, Lash elaborates these distinctions by reference to Benjamin's concept of allegory, to Surrealism, and to Artaud, the latter described as having broken with a theatrical or mimetic "doubleness" so as to embrace "supplementarity." The terms are familiar.

The picture I have already sketched of Sontag gives reason for doubting the accuracy of this picture as it applies to Sontag herself, though I grant she has been understood along these lines. Or perhaps we should say that she "dedifferentiates" Lash's distinction, by advocating properties from *both* of his lists; form, yes, and words and reason too, but also images, tolerance, pleasure. The strongest reason for disputing such a view of Sontag, however, is her own evident ambivalence about the supplementarity that Lash finds definitive of postmodernism. Sontag is hardly silent on the topic. She describes Camp as offering "for art (and life) a different—a supplementary—set of standards" (286). In "On Style," she discusses the work of art (in the words of Raymond Bayer) as "the schematized and disengaged memory of a volition," which (she goes on to say in her own words) "sets itself at a distance from the world," a distance she then characterizes by citing Nietzsche, to the effect that "Art is not an imitation of nature but its metaphysical supplement, raised up beside it in order to overcome it" (30). More negatively, she describes pornography (in the same essay) as "a substitute for life"; to the extent that pornography provokes

arousal, it contradicts the detachment and contemplative “grace” that characterizes (in Genet’s terms) real art (27).

I take these assertions of difference, of opposition, to be less evocative of Lash’s Lyotardian “supplementarity” than of Derrida’s. The latter’s *Of Grammatology* analysis of writing as a “dangerous supplement” to speech is already an oft-told tale. Where meaning and the speaking self are (self-confirmingly) co-present in the moment of utterance, writing introduces an element of mediacy—deferral, absence, iteration. Writing thus exists beyond or after speaking. In replicating speech, it can be replicated in turn, can be fragmented, quoted, thus disseminated. Derrida makes a similar point in “Plato’s Pharmacy,” where writing is likened to a drug, a *pharmakon*, which kills or “dulls the memory.” “While the phonic signifier would remain in animate proximity, in the living presence of *mnēmē* or *psyche*, the graphic signifier, which reproduces it or imitates it, goes one degree further away, falls outside of life, pulls life out of itself and puts it to sleep in the type of its double.”<sup>20</sup>

I have already cited Sontag’s case “Against Interpretation,” where interpretation is described as setting up “a shadow world” that “duplicates” and hence depletes or impoverishes our experience. Indeed, interpretation is explicitly described as a “poison” that turns “*the world into this world*” (7). A similar logic of depletion and alienation—of supplementation threatening diminishment—is elaborated throughout *On Photography*, and in terms deeply akin to Derrida’s. Like Derrida’s signifier, Sontag’s photograph “is both a pseudo-presence and a token of absence” (16). “By furnishing this already crowded world with a duplicate one of images,” Sontag writes, “photography makes us feel that the world is more available than it really is” (24). “Photography is the reality”; hence “the real object is often experienced as a letdown” (147); photography turns the tables on reality, “turning *it* into a shadow” (180), a “ghostly trace” (9). The camera, like the *pharmakon*, is both “the antidote and the disease” (179); photography is a supplement that is “not so much an instrument of memory as an invention of it or a replacement” (165). In “Plato’s Pharmacy” the god of writing “it goes without saying... must also be the god of death” (435). Per Sontag’s “In Plato’s Cave” analysis, “All photographs are *momento mori*” (15).

Between the two, Sontag’s analysis of supplementarity is the more distressed—though she is mindful, like Derrida, that supplementarity is intrinsic to writing, that silence is the dialectical counterpart of speech, that “doubling, duplicating” are essential resources in the vocabulary of artistic forms—as she makes the point in her analysis of Bresson’s “spiritual style” (*AI* 180). Indeed, in this latter context she anticipates Nelson’s claim about the “absence” effect of her own rhetoric by saying that “the greatest source of emotional power in art... lies in form. The detachment and retarding of the emotions, through the consciousness of form, makes them far stronger and more intense in the end” (181)—which enables her to liken Bresson’s “spiritual style” to Cocteau’s “homosexual sensibility” in very positive terms, as exemplifying an “inwardness which is the

true morality” (191). So it is probably no wonder that Sontag finds the photographic devaluation of replication a dubious prospect, as not so much “a liberation of but as a subtraction from the self” (*OP* 41), a fear not all that distant from the thought that “the end,” finally, will not come, will be endlessly deferred, a circumstance that would thus deny the very intensity that art, in its modern phase at least, had promised.

Or perhaps we can say that a fascination with photography is always already a fascination with death, a way of taking it “bit by bit,” as if photography were a form of mourning. If so, then Sontag’s refusal of photography, her anxiety about its supplementarity, about supplementarity in general, can be read via the trope of melancholia. As a trope, Juliana Schiesari has argued, melancholy has functioned as “a topos of expressibility for men,” giving “them a means to express their sorrows” while simultaneously, in the case of Hamlet, say, devaluing female loss, appropriating it for male purposes. According to Victoria Smith and Jacqueline Rose, a primary trope of such female modernists as Djuna Barnes and Virginia Woolf is the reappropriation, along more emphatically Freudian lines, of this authority for “insistent” and “intelligent” truth-telling.<sup>21</sup>

Thus Smith discusses *Nightwood* as a study in losses—sexual, amatory, and historical—wherein lamentation is (at least) doubled, various characters (male and female) mourning the loss of Robin, Barnes herself, through them, mourning the losses of love and voice suffered by homosexual people in a time and place where their love was, as if literally, unspeakable. Except that the logic of melancholia refuses to take death or silence for an answer—finds ways to speak, indeed, by incorporating the “lost object” into a narrative, or into an ego structure, an identification, whereby that narrative can, finally, be spoken. Likewise, Rose discusses Woolf and Freud together, as melancholics alike for whom death both is and is not supportable, bearable. Rose takes Freud’s hostility toward melancholia—his assigning to melancholy the hateful side of the ambivalence typical of the syndrome—as itself a sign of melancholy, adding on Freudian warrant “that murdering an object is the start of identification and not the end” so that “the object which has been murdered is precisely the one which is most mourned” (5–6). As if Freud were killing identification, at the risk of identifying with murder, or with the murder victim; as if only if an end were in sight, as in mourning, does mourning ever dare begin. In Woolf’s case, however, death is “the absent presence which stalks [her] writing” (8), is itself a trope, an identification, expressed via a modernist stylistic “mix of oversharpened and disintegrating relief” (11). If death (rather than the female body) is “on the far side of reason,” then Woolf’s modernism can be taken “as a way of refusing the appropriate relations of presence and absence which should hold between the living and the dead,” by going to death’s “far side,” as speaking from and to the dead (12–3).

Also “speaking from and to the dead,” it now seems to me, is Susan Sontag. I say so because she says as much herself, in numerous passages I have already cited. Melancholy is *her* figure for the haunted modernist project—for her sense

that it haunts her, as a ghost she must mourn; for her sense that, in coming after, she haunts or follows it, becoming ghostly in her turn. In that sense, melancholy is not only a theme but a structure, a geometry of space and time, a charting of distances and affiliations. In Freudian terms, absence or loss leads to a doubling; the lost object is not let go of but represented, a representation that is subsequently incorporated, as conscience, as part of the self who represents, though a part that sets up the self as an oscillation of negativities, of affiliations and hostilities; the dead are objects too dear to abandon, but their absence fosters aggressions and displacements. Melancholy is the supplement's supplement; it is the source of intelligence, of astonishingly un-self-conscious truth-telling that, though ostensibly self-directed, even self-conscious, is equally or scathingly critical of the world—yet also pleasurable to express. Melancholy is, in Sontag's terms, a "posthumous" approach to life, but that very belatedness is a source of profound energy, even tenderness, and provides a tropic machinery of extraordinary avidity, complexity, and delicacy.

In adducing Freud here I am not claiming any privileged knowledge of Sontag's interior life or personal experience; I am talking about her *writing* and claiming that crucial features of it conform to the tropic logic of melancholy as that has been elaborated from Freud via contemporary literary criticism. As both Sayres and Kennedy avow, Sontag's oeuvre evinces a remarkable coherence, providing numerous powerful and mostly tropic echoes across the expansive space of her writerly project. Nelson elaborates the self-consciousness of this echo-chamber effect; he also notes the way Sontag's writing "absents" her subjects—kills them, after a fashion—that we might all the more desire their (her) representation. I have elaborated on this latter point by suggesting that the oscillation of subject and object in Sontag—especially in *Under the Sign of Saturn*, where Sontag begins by marking the death of Paul Goodman and concludes by seconding Elias Canetti's refusal of death—both heightens and complicates our sense of her self-consciousness, by posing the question of how *far* it extends; at what point in Sontag's description of Barthes can we say that Barthes is *only* Barthes, no longer (also) Sontag; at what point is Sontag's writing *about* Barthes (in "Writing Itself") *only* objective, descriptive, no longer self-reflexive or self-aware? One can hardly avoid asking the questions, but what I have called the "Sontag effect" says, in effect, that the answers are never stable, are always subject to the contingencies of reading; you can never remember enough to always know for sure—of that, I can assure you. Hence, perhaps, all the difficulty this bibliography documents when it comes to deciding, for example, whether Sontag is a modernist or a postmodernist. Or, similarly, whether Sontag is homophobic or elitist or misogynist. I want to say, now, that the structural logic of melancholy renders all such either/or descriptions, almost literally, beside the point, as missing exactly the *ambivalence* characteristic of Sontag's writing and therefore missing its passion and energy, its pathos, as well. If Sontag "solicits self-knowledge" through writing, the self she writes about, and I mean this literally, is her unconscious—the self she does not yet know; or,

perhaps, the self she will only know as we know her, the self she will read. No wonder she's ambivalent—endlessly, insistently so.

I hope the links between melancholy and modernism are, by now, self-evident, likewise their pertinence to Sontag. The claim that melancholy is an expressly or essentially *female* form of modernism remains to be elaborated, a task I undertake, for conclusion's sake, by reference to *The Volcano Lover*. On Rose's analysis of Virginia Woolf, the latter takes death not to be the end of reason but the beginning, if a beginning that calls some versions of reason, "the false telos of masculine logic" (12), into question—specified exactly as the Freudian proviso that "work," the work of grief, will have an end. But what goes beyond the end of reason, of consciousness, is the unconscious, which melancholy interpellates or hails as a ghost—so that "Haunting, or being haunted, might indeed be another word for writing" (17). And the ghost who haunts, who gives Woolf the inspiration for her *écriture féminine*, is a male ghost, one of the legion of dead men whose slaughter in "The Great War" drove Woolf to madness: "Claiming allegiance with the dead in fantasy, living death on the other's behalf," writes Rose, "might be one way a woman writer could lay claim to a historically refused form of belonging" (14–5).

The pertinence to Sontag of this Bloomsbury intertext—linking Woolf to Freud to Eliot to Barnes—is well attested to; Barnes and Woolf were favorite writers of Sontag's adolescence.<sup>22</sup> Moreover, it is hard to read Woolf's *A Room of One's Own*, especially her discussions of androgyny in Shakespeare and Keats and Proust and of the fatality of writing *as* a woman or *as* a man ("for anything written with that conscious bias is doomed to death"), without also hearing Sontag's similar admonitions.<sup>23</sup> But then Rose's notion that Woolf wrote out of and toward death raises a question, if doom is really a prerequisite for writing, as does the thought that melancholy identification is often critical, accusatory. I already hear a version of that accusation in the last words of *The Volcano Lover*, in which Eleonora de Fonseca Pimentel posthumously curses "those who did not care about more than their own glory or well being.... Damn them all" (419). I think we would do well to keep this ambivalence in mind when thinking through Sontag's entire career.

What drives her, clearly, is a largely male-authored writerly tradition that Sontag is clearly disinclined, probably unable, to forswear. One hardly doubts that her abbreviated undergraduate education, not to mention her graduate study in philosophy, made for a very male reading list, certainly in the 1950s. But it is a tradition Sontag has related to, lived out, very critically, and from the very beginnings of her career. We might say she haunts it, as it haunts her—as if Sontag's feminism also exists in the form of an absence, by which she makes herself present. Indeed, much that makes *The Volcano Lover* one of Sontag's most interesting books is the way it ties her career both as critic and fiction writer together, by speaking, especially in its closing sections, from beyond the grave.

The links between *The Volcano Lover: A Romance* and Sontag's earlier works are many and already well-documented. Stacey Olster, for example, adduces "recycling" as both a long-standing Sontagian trope for modernity—in the dialectical progress/exhaustion of art-formal devices, in the demystification of cultural myths or metaphors, in the equation of image consumption with capitalist excess—and as characterizing as well the meta-critical aspect of Sontag's exercise in "romance" as both a literary and pedagogic undertaking, literary in its agenda of (modernist) conventions, pedagogic in subjecting those conventions to (postmodernist) critique.<sup>24</sup> However, per Olster, the overdeterminations of modernism are difficult to outmaneuver. Though Sontag adduces her own itinerary from Camp to Surrealism to Nietzschean perspectivism via the fateful parable of Sir William Hamilton's "Portland Vase"—its declension from artifact to Etruria Ware via the mass-cult ministrations of Josiah Wedgwood, its destruction and successive restorations once housed in the British Museum—it is Olster's view that Sontag's juxtaposition of Emma Hamilton and Eleonora de Fonseca Pimentel effects a similar collapse of historical difference into aesthetic similarity. Though Emma, in striking "Attitudes" drawn from classical mythology, literally embodies an outmoded, discredited, "imagistic" concept of history evocative of *On Photography*, her ostensible opposite, the Jacobin poet-revolutionary, like her equally doomed compatriots, seeks to die by the edifying standards of "history painting," thus to provide something like historical hope. Yet the hope carries less weight than Eleonora's closing curse. Whether Sontag's reliance on cinematic, neo-Godardian juxtapositions to out-talk the insufficiencies of narrative is any better seems, on Olster's account, doubtful—and exactly to the extent that Sontag too reduces history to Derridian "slippage" or deferment via the figure of Mt. Vesuvius itself, "always already" on the verge of erupting, but never in ways that allow or foretell true progress.

A considerably less skeptical or less partial view of the relationship between Sontag's career and *The Volcano Lover* is available in Liam Kennedy's *Susan Sontag: Mind as Passion*. While sharing a view of the novel as evoking "the relationship between then and now" (120) via its largely third-person omniscient narration, Kennedy also notes how Sir William Hamilton, Sontag's "Cavaliere," British ambassador to the Bourbon Kingdom of the Two Sicilies, evokes specific figures from Sontag's earlier work, most specifically Roland Barthes and Walter Benjamin, the former in his devotion to an aesthetic view of the world, the latter in his melancholy devotion to collecting and the "baroque cult of ruins" (*USS* 120). Though Hamilton is Sontag's "Volcano Lover," famously devoted to the scientific exploration and study of this most "magical" of modernist mountains, he is also—like Barthes, Benjamin, and Sontag—a writer. Collecting is literally equated with writing early in the novel, when the narrator describes what follows upon the collector's "recognition" of some hitherto "neglected" object: "He starts to collect it, or to write about it, or both" (71). Later in the novel, we might observe, as the ambassador worries about the prospects of a French invasion and a timely departure, the link of collecting and writing is confirmed when the

Cavaliere makes an inventory of his possessions. We might note here that Sontag likens Benjamin to a “courtier,” in his passion for collecting, but also in his capacities for flattery and self-abasement (*USS* 119, 121), in all of which the Cavaliere is equally adept. For that matter, I cannot help but remark that Sontag’s account of the Cavaliere’s remorse at the death of his first wife, Catherine, is an almost textbook elaboration of melancholia, which casts his obsession with Vesuvius in a different light, as betokening his continued commitment to death, to silence, to his posthumous “rage,” despite the arrival of Emma in his life.

Another document bearing on the autobiographical or self-reflexive quality of *The Volcano Lover* is the “Special Message for the First Edition from Susan Sontag,” a supplement found in the signed and illustrated first edition but lacking from the Farrar Straus Giroux text. Probably the most obvious element of this message is the way it confirms the link of Sontag and Hamilton suggested by Olster and Kennedy alike. Sontag recalls how the novel effectively began when, on a visit to London, she purchased prints of Mt. Vesuvius taken from Hamilton’s *Campi Phlegraei*; her subsequent fascination with Hamilton’s fascination expressed itself “in the form of telling a story.” So both are “collectors,” and both pay court, as it were, through narrative—though the Cavaliere is typically under greater narrative duress. As confirming this link one last time, let me note that Sontag here describes the writer’s search as for “an ideal form in which you can put...everything”; elsewhere, she describes the writer as “someone who is interested in everything” (*TR* 6). In *The Volcano Lover*, she describes Hamilton as “interested in everything” (20).

A less frequently noticed identification is of Sontag with her novel’s female characters. Kennedy, of course, like many other critics, adduces the similarity of Sontag and Eleonora Fonseca. Certainly Sontag invites the analogy, by writing herself (“the author of this book”) into Eleonora’s final speech; by adducing Eleonora’s biography—as a female intellectual prodigy, as being untimely married and famously divorced, as a revolutionary journalist and educator who nevertheless avoided explicitly feminist position-taking. But other identifications are equally possible. Olster, in equating Emma with Eleonora, effectively suggests one: Sontag and Emma. Here we might observe Emma’s links to popular if not lower-class culture, as artist’s model, as sex-worker, as celebrated singer and actress and professional “beauty.” Sontag’s recent writings on opera come to mind, as indicating the value she currently assigns to “voice,” especially the female voice.<sup>25</sup> Moreover, she describes Emma as an avid reader—who “remembers everything” (123). So it is tempting to read the narrator’s critique of snobbery, as it applies to Emma (“Odd that people judged vulgar are invariably presumed also to be lacking in self-awareness” [242]), as a critique of Sontag’s own famous distrust of commercial mass culture. But perhaps the strongest evidence on this account is Sontag’s casting herself, in her message narrative, as the “adolescent wife” to someone we might think of as a scholar husband. And that link, once allowed, also permits comparing Sontag to the Cavaliere’s first

wife, described as someone “so happy to leave” (375) home upon marrying, as an asthmatic, as a lover of music, as a devout moralist, as someone who “expected everything of herself (97). In view of these similarities, it is no wonder Sontag felt compelled (as she recounts) to draft Puccini’s Baron Scarpia to play the “ultra-wicked” role in the novel, someone with whom she “could *not* identify.” (But then I hear Scarpia’s disdain of “poets and professors and liberal aristocrats” [267] and hear Sontag’s critiques of humanists and of Diane Arbus and her admirers....)

There is more than enough Sontag, we might say, to go around, and in ways that only heighten the “Sontag effect,” to the extent that each of these identifications is equally plausible yet qualified, if only by the others if not also by our awareness of Sontag’s entire canon, which this bibliography is tasked to embody, to recount. I must agree with Liam Kennedy in seeing the feminist strain of *The Volcano Lover* as a striking and positive though hardly unpredictable development, as the novel’s “dominant” discourse; many of Sontag’s *Volcano Lover* remarks on the politics of gender are of a piece with her early 1970s essays on the politics of beauty and language. I would remark here—against the view that Eleonora’s condemnatory remarks are too little, too late to sufficiently counterbalance the aestheticism of Hamilton and Emma and its murderous political expression via “the hero,” history’s Lord Nelson—that the book’s first words, in the Farrar Straus Giroux text at least, are in an epigraph from *Così fan tutti*, the title of which (“Thus do all women”) is repeated, both early and late, as a kind of absent presence, a reminder of the ways women do and do not count in the larger narrative that is history—or count, at least, differently. Much to their detriment and sorrow. Hence I am inclined to read the novel’s four posthumous monologues as, literally, the return of some repressed—all the more moving to the extent that we take Sontag to have been party, in some fashion, to the repression.

As exemplifying this feminist subtext, I cite in closing a narrative aside found at the end of [Part Two, Chapter 1](#), of *The Volcano Lover* (138–40). The aside follows from the observation that “The great collectors are not women, any more than are the great joke-tellers.” The story itself begins with a joke, which we do not hear, though we are told that it is “witty and subtle. Rather deep, even.” Then the narrator declares a gender (“Being a woman...”), having noted that repeating a joke is like pitching a baseball, or driving a car, so that *her* retelling of the joke “doesn’t come naturally,” involves awkwardness, mimicry. I take the punchlines to be several here.

The first I hear in the context of recent analyses of Freud’s theory of jokes, or at least of tendentious jokes, which on Freudian warrant are motivated by eroticism or hostility (or both) and require three figures: the male joker, the “exposed” female target or victim, and the male rival who “gets” the joke. Except, according to Jerry Aline Fliieger, the roles are profoundly unstable—because what motivates the joke in the first place is lack, associated with (identified as) femininity; because the female “victim,” as the address of the “purloined

punchline,” is the locus of desire, of something *present*; because the person who hears the joke is also victimized, as not knowing something, the punchline, and is therefore motivated to victimize the next rival, though he evidently needs another “female” to prove his prowess, having been “feminized” in his turn, and so forth.<sup>26</sup> In other words, roles and genders circulate among bodies, may be both masculine and feminine, may be both aggressive and solicitous, both tragic and comic—a theory of narrative, I want to say, perfectly in accord with the Freudian reading of melancholy I have already elaborated, in which identifications are multiple, in which aggressions are alloyed with deep affections, in which pleasure follows from an endless and hopeless painfulness that nevertheless induces insight and volubility and courage to go on.

Sontag herself draws, shall we say, a different moral. In her account, “The joke is this impersonal possession. It doesn’t have anyone’s signature. It was given to me—but you didn’t make it up; it was in my custody, and I chose to pass it on, keep it going. It isn’t about any of us. It doesn’t describe you or me. It has a life of its own” (139). Perhaps we should say that Sontag-as-narrator is slyly denying the Freudian implication of joking, by failing to specify the gender of “you.” Or perhaps she is saying that all of us, in coming “after” the joke, are effectively female, awkward performers, melancholy collectors, human beings. She certainly is saying that stories exist only in being told, or retold, or recycled; or that, in retelling a story, it’s the “choice” of story that matters more than the person making it, or that the choice, in some existential sense, makes the person. In *The Volcano Lover*, there is more “Sontag” than in most of her books, more melancholy, more ecstasy as well.<sup>27</sup> Part of the pleasure of her text, part of its texture, depends upon seeing the links, following the threads, counting them, in that sense retelling them. So I imagine I speak for Sontag in sharing the hope that *The Volcano Lover* will have a life of its own, apart from its author’s; a posthumous life, having been “passed on.” The question is out of her hands. She’s made her pitch. Now I’ve made mine....

*Leland Poague*

## NOTES

- 1 Information about alternate titles is gleaned from Sontag’s own publication lists; her decision to *retain* the original titles there, to communicate them to us, implies ambivalence about the titles that at least some of her essays carried into print.
- 2 *Roland Barthes by Roland Barthes* (New York: Hill & Wang, 1977): “It all must be considered as if spoken by a character in a novel.”
- 3 References to secondary sources listed in the bibliography proper, hence accessible via the indexes, are by page number, where necessary, cited in-text. *Conversations with Susan Sontag* is listed in [Section F](#). References to Sontag’s essays, stories, and books are treated similarly, though references to pieces subsequently reprinted as chapters are to the first “book” version, as summarized in [Section A](#) of the bibliography. In some few cases, abbreviations are included to indicate reprint

venue, as follows: *Against Interpretation (AI)*, *Styles of Radical Will (SRW)*, *On Photography (OP)*, *Under the Sign of Saturn (USS)*.

- 4 See “Zero (From *In America*),” *Artes* (Stockholm) 2 (1995):15–34.
- 5 On *The Volcano Lover*, see below, and Sections H and J. See also Michael Levenson, “The Critic as Novelist,” *Wilson Quarterly* 18 (Winter 1994):116–24. Regarding *Against Interpretation*, see “Preface: Thirty Years Later...,” *Three-penny Review* No. 66 (Summer 1996):6–7; cited hereafter as *TR*.
- 6 See, among other Section H essays, those by McRobbie and Bawer. See also Camille Paglia, “Sontag, Bloody Sontag,” in *Vamps and Tramps* (New York: Vintage Books, 1994):344–60, and Liam Kennedy, *Susan Sontag: Mind as Passion* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1995).
- 7 See Moe Meyer’s “Introduction: Reclaiming the Discourse of Camp,” in Moe Meyer, ed., *The Politics and Poetics of Camp* (London: Routledge, 1994): 1–22. An alternative view is offered by Jonathan Dollimore in *Sexual Dissidence* (see Section K).
- 8 Kim Michasiw, “Camp, Masculinity, Masquerade,” *Differences* 6.2–3 (Summer-Fall 1994):146–73; here p. 167.
- 9 Sontag is quoted from Zoë Heller, “The Life of a Head Girl!” (12). See Sayres, *Susan Sontag* (14); see also Scott McLemee, “Susan Sontag,” in Claude J. Summers, ed., *The Gay and Lesbian Literary Heritage* (New York: Henry Holt & Co., 1995):663, and Jill Franks, “Susan Sontag,” in Michael J. Tyrkus, ed., *Gay and Lesbian Biography* (Detroit: St. James Press, 1997):417–8.
- 10 Sontag reconfigured the relations among these essays (and the piece on Bresson’s “Spiritual Style”) in *A Susan Sontag Reader*, where they appear as a distinct set (see Section A).
- 11 See *The Politics and Poetics of Camp* (cited):23–4.
- 12 See “Susan Sontag at Washington University, April 24, 1984” in *River Styx*: “Notes on ‘Camp’” was “really written for Lionel Trilling. I wanted him to read this essay and think about something besides Matthew Arnold” (9).
- 13 Much that I say about the categorical imperative derives from Frederick Copleston’s *A History of Philosophy*, Vol. 6, Part II, Kant (Garden City, NY: Image, Doubleday, 1960). He cites the following passage from Kant’s *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals*: “As I have robbed the will of all impulses (or inducements) which could arise for it from following any particular law, there remains nothing but the universal conformity of actions to law in general, which should serve the will as a principle. That is to say, *I am never to act otherwise than so that I can also will that my maxim should become a universal law*” (112). I take Sontag’s definition of morality as a “maxim” in exactly this Kantian sense—and call attention as well to the echoes, in Sontag, of the Kantian vocabulary on view here.
- 14 I am alert to the dispute among Kant scholars as to the status of sense experience in his analysis of the aesthetic encounter. I cannot vouch for Sontag’s overall indebtedness or accuracy to Kant, but do take her to side with those for whom sense experience is a crucial factor. See Donald W. Crawford, *Kant’s Aesthetic Theory* (Madison: Univ. of Wisconsin Press, 1974), esp. Chapter 5, “Kant’s Aesthetic Formalism.” See also Christopher Norris, *What’s Wrong with Post-*

- modernism: Critical Theory and the Ends of Philosophy* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Univ. Press, 1990), esp. Chapter 5, “Derrida and Kant.”
- 15 See Tobin Siebers, “Kant and the Politics of Beauty,” *Philosophy and Literature* 22 (April 1998):31–50. It bears saying that Sontag generally avoids “beauty” as an aesthetic predicate, just as Kant avoids “pleasure.” Then again, Sontag’s “erotics” of art does evoke the Kantian notion, per Siebers, that symbols require “that subjects become ‘suitsors for agreement from everyone else’” (46), as if criticism *itself* were the eros of art.
  - 16 Caryl Flinn, “The Deaths of Camp,” *Camera Obscura* No. 35 (May 1995): 53–84; here p. 56.
  - 17 Sigmund Freud, “Mourning and Melancholia,” in John Rickman, ed., *A General Selection from the Works of Sigmund Freud* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday Anchor, 1957):124–40; here, p. 126. Further citations will be in-text.
  - 18 Larissa MacFarquhar, “Premature Postmodern,” *Nation* (16 Oct. 1995): 432–6.
  - 19 On Sontag’s relation to the New York Intellectuals, see Harvey M.Teres, *Renewing the Left: Politics, Imagination, and the New York Intellectuals* (New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 1996), esp. Chapter 8, “The ‘Dark Ladies’ of New York.”
  - 20 Jacques Derrida, “Plato’s Pharmacy,” in Julie Rivkin and Michael Ryan, eds., *Literary Theory: An Anthology* (Maiden, MA: Blackwell Publishers, 1998): 439–40. On the relation of Sontag to Derrida to Nietzsche to Kant, see Benjamin Bennett, “Bridge: Against Nothing,” in Peter J.Burgard, ed., *Nietzsche and the Feminine* (Charlottesville: Univ. Press of Virginia, 1994):289–315.
  - 21 My elaboration of the melancholia/feminism connection was inspired by, derives from, Victoria L.Smith, “A Story beside(s) Itself: The Language of Loss in Djuna Barnes’s *Nightwood*,” *PMLA* 114 (Mar. 1999):194–206, and Jacqueline Rose, “Virginia Woolf and the Death of Modernism,” *Raritan* 18.2 (Fall 1998):1–18. Both will be cited in-text. Juliana Schiesari’s *The Gendering of Melancholia: Feminism, Psychoanalysis, and the Symbolics of Loss in Renaissance Literature* (Ithaca: Cornell Univ. Press, 1992) is cited from Smith; here, p. 201.
  - 22 See my *Conversations with Susan Sontag* (Jackson: Univ. Press of Mississippi, 1995), pp. 36, 121, 194. See also Miriam Berkley, “PW Interviews Susan Sontag” ([Section F](#)).
  - 23 Virginia Woolf, *A Room of One’s Own* (New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, 1929):108.
  - 24 Stacey Olster, “Remakes, Outtakes, and Updates in Susan Sontag’s *The Volcano Lover*,” *Modern Fiction Studies* 41 (Spring 1995):117–39.
  - 25 See “An Ecstasy of Lament: On *Pelléas et Mélisande*” *Threepenny Review* No. 73 (Spring 1998):19–20.
  - 26 Jerry Aline Flieger, “The Purloined Punchline: Joke as Textual Paradigm,” *MLN* 98 (1983):941–67; rpt. in Robert Con Davis and Ronald Schleifer, eds., *Contemporary Literary Criticism: Literary and Cultural Studies*, 2d ed. (New York: Longman, 1989):351–68.
  - 27 Sontag’s own view of the “melancholy” aspect of *The Volcano Lover* is elaborated in “The Art of Fiction CXLIII,” *Paris Review* No. 137 (Winter 1995): 176–208. Per Sontag, she had imagined her next novel as having the title *The Anatomy of Melancholy*. Subsequently, she both resisted and exceeded that obsession by

limiting the “melancholy” sensibility to the Prologue and [Part I](#) of *The Volcano Lover*, the remaining three parts being keyed or cued to the other three humors or sensibilities. I am claiming that, per Freud, melancholy and anger go hand in hand, so that the “choleric” arias of Part IV are, to use Sontag’s own phrase, “A supplementary fiction” (202), melancholy as existing beyond the end, thus as refusing or refuting it.

# PART ONE

## Primary Works

## SECTION A

### Books, Collections, Etc.

A1 *The Benefactor*. New York: Farrar, Straus & Co.; Toronto: Ambassador, 1963. ix+273 pp.

Begins with an expository, first-person table of contents. Epigraphs on sleeping or dreaming follow. Chapter 1 begins “Je rêve donc je suis”; Chapter 17 begins “Voilà que j’ai touché l’automne des idées.” The paradoxical relations between thinking and being—figured in displacements from province to capital, from male to female, from Sontag’s America to Hippolyte’s France—frame (and shadow) the entire narrative.

“One” (G74). Emphasizes the difference between “those days” and “Now,” especially the “change” in his “preoccupation.” Recalls childhood and adolescence by reference to “traits which distinguished” him from his peers while asserting that his (family, class) origins were “unremarkable.” Such paradoxes abound, and are further complicated by the uncanny sense, in biographical retrospect, that Sontag has as much predicted as transposed her life story, as in Hippolyte’s first philosophical article (“important ideas on a topic of no great importance”), which, like “Notes on ‘Camp,’” “excited some discussion in the general literary world” and gained Hippolyte entrance into the salon of Frau Anders. Sontag’s aphoristic “voice” is here, surely, but is kept in (pleasurable, irritating) suspension by the narrator’s as-if unconscious habit of self-contradiction, as in his narratorial claim that “truth is always something that is told,” that is “convincing,” followed immediately by the claim that writing, versus speaking, banishes “the thought of another person,” should not “try to convince.”

“Two.” Professes not to remember (exactly) when “the dream of the two rooms” began, though the dream (of being ordered from one prisonlike room to another by a limping flutetoting sadist in a black wool bathing suit who is replaced by, or has become, a woman dressed in white, etc.) is recounted in detail to the reader and to Jean-Jacques, ex-boxer cum homosexual prostitute and habitué of Frau Anders’s salon. Rather than dream, Jean-Jacques writes, expressing his “dream-substance” in words, then replenishing it “in the show of the café.” He advises Hippolyte—who suspects that the dream had “interpreted itself” or was itself an

interpretation—to “outbid” his dream by living it. Hippolyte “labors” with his dream—as if pregnant (“Interpretation was my Caesarean”).

“Three.” Versions of the “two rooms” dream proliferate. Hippolyte attempts to “master” the dream by enacting it, externalizing it, which provides Hippolyte the “first taste of an inner life.” Visits the elderly conductor. Sleep is “rewarded with a new dream”; it begins with the flute player and includes curiously (a)sexual party games. The conductor and Hippolyte discuss solitude and art. Hippolyte professes himself a student of “the various styles of silence,” a matter of “crawling through” or “disembowelling” himself. Returns to the city and undertakes a “new project, the seduction of Frau Anders,” despite the latter’s (conventional) conviction that nothing has changed between them. Confirms the “parallel” of the seduction “campaign” and “the dream of the unconventional party” by imposing “a rigid discipline” of distance and discretion on the love affair. Herr Anders takes his wife on a business trip; Hippolyte eventually has a new dream.

“Four.” Reports the dream: of two half-naked men locked in struggle, of a young girl with a stick, of a secret shared with the bather, of a drum stuffed with flesh, of a “fault swelled to the size of a sin,” of a chapel full of odors, of a corpse wearing a crown, of an electric chair out of a gangster movie, of a birthlike ascension through a cathedral roof. Hippolyte reads the “widening thematic range” of his dreams as cueing a religious interpretation, if only to avoid a sense of defilement. Ponders the relation between silence and thought. Hippolyte and Father Trissotin discuss the legibility of dreams; where the priest wonders whether the dreams are devil-sent, to be countered and exorcised via priestly “form letters,” Hippolyte takes them as “messages from one part of myself to another,” and expresses a counter wish, not to rid himself of dreams but “to rid my dreams of me.” Hippolyte meets a young girl in a park. Hippolyte “eats” her ball and gives her his rosary.

“Five.” Hippolyte’s journal entries praise Jean-Jacques’s cheerfulness, reticence, the latter equated with (un)dismembered wholeness. Hippolyte confirms Jean-Jacques’s assertion that Hippolyte is not a writer, recounts the “pleasures of spectatorship” enjoyed by following Jean-Jacques, watching him dress, observing his surroundings (his campy flat, the “gossiping sisterhood of men” at the cafés). Describes the wordlessly “faultless encounters” of love in public lavatories. Describes Jean-Jacques’s efforts to disallow silence—by defending the theatricality of “being-what-one-is-not” against Hippolyte’s “unspoken objections”; by defending “obsession” against theatricality as a basis for trust; by defending his similarity to Hippolyte by emphasizing their differences, which leads to an “impromptu sexual encounter” between them. Hippolyte undertakes to distinguish himself from Jean-Jacques, by paring away possessions, by abandoning an exercise program. Returns to his dreams, but in the hope of making them “altogether silent,” like silent movies. Jean-Jacques advises Hippolyte to disavow principles and explanations (“To explain one thing

is to make another thing—which only litters the world the more”) by reference to the second of two pacifists, who had just killed his wife.

“Six.” Hippolyte asserts authority over Frau Anders by spiring her out of the capital. Bored with island life, Frau Anders writes (philosophical) letters to her daughter, Lucrezia, about money, bodies, religion, instinct, about “the intuition of women and the sensuous power and cruelty of black men.” Hippolyte and Frau Anders arrive in an Arab city; drugged, Frau Anders is seduced by the wife of an Arab barman while Hippolyte listens to poetry. Less passionate toward Frau Anders if more fond, Hippolyte shares his dreams with her, then sells her to a local merchant and returns to the capital.

“Seven.” Anxieties of irony (of acting/being, altruism/guilt) are cut short by “the dream of an elderly patron.” Though ordered by a “wizened old man,” dream-associated with infancy and inaudibility, to take a trip “around the world,” Hippolyte’s dream-self wanders the tobacco king’s estate in a bath towel after being told to wait in the garden by his son. He is told to dig; he throws a cat into the muddy hole, though the cat is still with him when he encounters Jean-Jacques, who reminds him of an impending operation. Hippolyte claims to be sleeping. Jean-Jacques becomes a malevolent giant; Hippolyte discovers his “entire left side was open and wet.” Daring not to report his failure, he wanders lost, leaning to the right to keep his balance. Death or darkness comes. Hippolyte awakes cursing the “captivity” of his dreams. Yet Professor Bulgaraux’s “Autogenist” interpretation overcomes Hippolyte’s despair by linking the un-self-conscious “being” of Autogenes to the sleep-inducing martyrdom of his hermaphrodite child by the serpentine Sophia, Dianus, who needed “periodic martyrdom” for his own sake, not for the salvation of men. Other interpretive “clues” focus on the association between the serpentine form of Sophia and “the shape of the human viscera.” Though created out of “dark matter,” humans are saved by becoming “light,” as in being disemboweled, dehumanized, purified of personality, of being-for-others. Sexuality, like criminality, “is an imperishable resource” of impersonalization—and so too is dreaming, a state of airy transparency. “Dreams are the onanism of the spirit.”

“Eight.” Hippolyte gives up (passive) reading for writing, others’ dreams for his own. Thoughts about the relations of acting to being, of theater to cinema, of waking and dreaming are prologue to recounting the story (echoing Artaud’s experience as an actor in Dreyer’s *The Passion of Joan of Arc*) of Hippolyte’s “last work as an actor,” playing the role of father-confessor to a serial child-murderer who had once played Joan of Arc’s comrade in a film by a renowned Scandinavian director. Against the latter’s view that the murderous nobleman was “passionate,” Hippolyte urges the (Autogenist) view that he was insatiable to the point of indifference (“Don’t exonerate him, I urged Larsen.... Let nothing be interpreted”). Back in the capital, Frau Anders’s daughter receives a letter from her mother, which “hints at ransom.” When Hippolyte produces the money to pay the ransom, Lucrezia, lately his lover, becomes jealous; they discuss beauty,

boredom, preoccupation. Hippolyte ruminates on the “perpetual presentness” of dreams by contrast with the rhetorical and revocable reality of events.

“Nine.” Distraught at the thought of his wife’s “insincerity,” Herr Anders informs Hippolyte of a letter from her, hinting she had entered a nunnery and appointing Hippolyte her “trustee in the world”; Herr Anders wishes to remarry and seeks help in obtaining a divorce. Hippolyte discusses his relationship to the somewhat naive, celebrity-fond Monique (“a functionary in good causes”) by reference to the happiness he imagined he’d provided for Frau Anders, liberating her from one life by (re)confining her to another. Ponders his “vocation of self-investigation” and “several hitherto unremarked inconsistencies.” Discusses revolution with Tububu and (later, on the street) with a temporarily pregnant Monique. An angry Monique delivers a (locally posted) letter from Frau Anders; Hippolyte meets a disfigured Frau Anders, who insists that Hippolyte tell her what to do. Jean-Jacques’s warnings about Frau Anders prove less than consoling, though consolation comes in “the dream of the piano lesson.” A white-clad “Mother Superior” presides over a piano recital in the “warm and sunny” garden of an ice palace. Hippolyte crawls into the piano; meets “a young man with a tiny mustache” whom he urges to crawl through a tiny “hole in the floor of the box” as classmates attack the piano. Hippolyte shoots the Mother Superior and everyone else. He is pulled out of a tree by “the man in the black bathing suit.” Ponders how this dream is and is not like the others. Upon noting the likeness of Frau Anders and Mother Superior, he sets fire to Frau Anders’s apartment.

“Ten.” Wishing for “some token” confirming his murder of Frau Anders, Hippolyte visits a still-jealous Monique; ordered to leave, Hippolyte confesses to “real murder. The opposite of procreation.” Attends to “total attention.” Jean-Jacques and Hippolyte conclude a conversation on modes of individualism (accretion vs. destruction) and the rules of looking by attending “that charming American film about the ape-man.” Hippolyte departs the capital to attend his ailing father; they discuss patrimony, marriage, murder, flowers. Hippolyte returns to find Monique married. Frau Anders returns (“My dear, you’re no better as a murderer than as a white-slaver”). Hippolyte has a “marvellous idea” to present Frau Anders with “a great surprise.” Upon his father’s death, Hippolyte devolves his father’s “cash and negotiable securities” anonymously on Jean-Jacques and a young poet; inspired by the story of an old woman and her crippled horse, Hippolyte undertakes to refurbish his inherited town house especially for Frau Anders.

“Eleven.” Hippolyte and Frau Anders meet regularly in the Zoological Gardens; he tells her of the house. Ponders “Privacy” as the guiding purpose of his refurbishment plans: “It was to be both a museum of her past and the warehouse from which she could select the pleasures of her future”; Frau Anders tours the house with “the celebrated music-hall actress Genevieve,” though is reluctant to accept Hippolyte’s gift without the prospect of a husband to ease her loneliness. Afraid he has miscalculated in the matter of the

furnishings, Hippolyte is relieved when Frau Anders agrees to occupy the house. A domestically inclined Hippolyte seeks a suitable mate; Frau Anders proposes herself. In the room “designed for the expression of strong emotions” Frau Anders orders Hippolyte to “Repair” her; “seized by an erotic fury,” Hippolyte discovers Frau Anders’s disfigurements (like the crippled legs of the limping horse) entirely healed. Frau Anders, in a white bathrobe, kneels beside Hippolyte in the chapel; restored to himself by the thought of his dreams, Hippolyte rises to his feet and flees.

“Twelve” (G23). Hiding from Frau Anders, Hippolyte’s urgency is eased by “the dream of the mirror.” Standing in a chateau ballroom “trying to recall a name,” Hippolyte decides to open his eyes by gazing in a mirror, the substance of which keeps altering; to gauge the truth (of the mirror, of his reflection), Hippolyte strips naked. He confronts a liveried “footman” by declaring himself “a potential amputee” and ripping off his own left leg. Hippolyte hobbles to an operating theater where volunteers have “agreed to allow their eyes to be put out” with knitting needles. Proposes to donate his entire body in service (worldly goods, as well) to the man in the black bathing suit in return for his leg and his sight. Commanded to run, Hippolyte returns to the streets of his childhood, where he encounters his house aflame. After saving a book of ancient history, his journal, and “a tray of tiny cups,” he encounters his father. A tea cup breaks; Hippolyte is asked what name he will call his wife. Though the dream is more nightmarish than its predecessors, the image of the mirror offers hope that Hippolyte’s day-life and dream-life can be brought together. Hippolyte returns to his country home, weds an officer’s daughter, and returns to the capital.

“Thirteen” (G23). Jean-Jacques and Hippolyte discuss the relation of action and conviction. Ponders his wife’s quiet respectfulness while denying that marriage “was only a haven” for a “guilty benefactor.” Though he urges his wife to “take a bedroom for herself,” he enjoys her company. Recounts the self-authored story of “The Invisible Husband,” of a white-suited snow prince and a weak-eyed princess, of a black fur suit and a talking bear who eschews speech, of a note written in blood after a three-day trek, of blindness eliminating the need for choice, of living “happily ever after.” Hippolyte’s wife befriends a Jewess on the run from German authorities, Frau Anders. Hippolyte ponders self-love, by reason and by anecdote; ponders hate and detachment as “solutions” to love (an awkward delivery boy comes to supper), self-love as reconciling love and separateness (a naked meditation comes to climax), great passions and small problems (a horse butcher comes to blows with Hippolyte), self-love as the purest form of monogamy (Hippolyte dreams of walking on a frozen sea).

“Fourteen” (G23). Ponders fashions in illness and his wife’s (impending) death from leukemia. He nurses her; they play tarot. Jean-Jacques impersonates an officer and wants to fight; declared dead, Hippolyte wins the battle. Hippolyte and the delivery boy return an unconscious Jean-Jacques to his flat. The delivery boy calls an ambulance for Hippolyte’s wife. She dies after three days in a coma. Though planning a public funeral, Hippolyte calls on Professor Bulgaroux to

perform “a private service.” Excerpts from his sermon “On the Death of a Virgin Soul” are included, to the effect that the criminal and the virgin each discovers “innocence” in “defiance,” to the effect that death is the last substitution, a completion, an emptiness, a decipherment, a photograph. Hippolyte rejects the rejection of grief, ponders ways of dying and childhood memories. Monique is a widow and a political activist. A “tightly stretched” Hippolyte awaits a dream.

“Fifteen.” Hearing Jean-Jacques is suspected of collaboration, Hippolyte guardedly renews their friendship. Draws upon his journals to describe an imaginary conversation, a word-duel of “Attack” (“You are a tourist of sensations”) and “Counter-Attack” (“You have begun to bore me”), followed by a real conversation in which Jean-Jacques declares Hippolyte incomplete (“a character without a story”) and Hippolyte renounces hero worship. Winter gloom and illness yield many dreams, each in many editions, dreams of “judgment and punishment.” Ponders the relation of habit and compulsion. Dreams the nightmarish “dream in the arena” in which his dream-self alternately observes and undergoes ritual dismemberment at the hands of three acrobats. Denies the dream. Decides to retire to the house he had refurbished for Frau Anders, despite his elder brother’s hostility, where still Frau Anders lives, as she (secretly) had during most of the occupation. Hippolyte pursues his isolation.

“Sixteen.” Acknowledges uncertainty about events of his retirement. Cites entries from a notebook; recounts “the puppet dream” (of a “dimly lit cellar,” of a “bed of bricks,” of a bearlike growl, of a black-suited bather with a key) as confirming his “decision” to retire, as both replying to “the dream of the two rooms” and illuminating events of his waking life, as if to “reconcile” his life-self and dream-self. Ponders eccentricity and psychology; enslavement and freedom; actions and rituals. A pimply-faced marksman thinks he’s dreaming. Hippolyte remembers his eviction from the house at the hands of (a different, a second) Frau Anders, whom he had once sold into slavery but who, through dream interpretation and money, is crowned queen of a desert village. Hippolyte denies her view of self-love, but is “resigned to her intervention” in his life.

“Seventeen.” Though living “in more modest quarters,” Hippolyte denies he is totally secluded, hence asserts that he has changed. Ponders Jean-Jacques’s picture in the paper; compares the latter’s election to the *Académie* with his own ambition, attained through “contraction,” to be “cleansed and purged” of his dreams. Recounts his “vocation of service” as an unpaid nurse in a pauper’s hospital and his pleasure in seeing “the principle of the distribution of handicaps” exhibited in the happy acrobatics of a crippled patient. Reports but (finally) discounts the rumor that he’d been “committed to a mental institution,” despite the evidence of his notebooks (a chapter-by-chapter outline of an autobiographical novel) and a “plaintive letter” appealing his imprisonment—in both of which we encounter a story only somewhat dissimilar from the narrative (ostensibly) containing it. Though time has dissolved waking and dreaming alike into fantasy and quietude, Hippolyte insists that he “made a choice” in choosing himself, achieving abolition through fulfillment. Eschews persuasion or

conviction in favor of description, silence, a posture, a photograph, “the repose of a privacy that is genuine.”

- A1a*                    *The Benefactor*. London: Eyre & Spottiswoode, 1964. 273pp.
- A1b*                    *The Benefactor*. New York: Avon, 1965. vii+224 pp.
- \**A1c*                    *Il benefattore*. Trans. (Ital.) Ettore Capriolo. Milan: Mondadori, 1965. 376pp.
- \**A1d*                    *Le bienfaiteur*. Trans. (Fr.) Guy Durand and Gérard Durand. Paris: Seuil, 1965. 287 pp.
- \**A1e*                    *The Benefactor*. London: Panther, 1966. 256 pp.
- \**A1f*                    *Der Wohltäter*. Trans. (Ger.) Louise Eisler-Fischer. Reinbek bei Hamburg: Rowohlt, 1966. 286 pp.
- \**A1g*                    *De weldoener*. Trans. (Dutch) Caspar Hendriks. Antwerp and Utrecht: Bruna, 1968. 272 pp.
- \**A1h*                    *Välgöraren*. Trans. (Swed.) Margareta Ullberg. Stockholm: Norstedt, 1968. 277 pp.
- \**A1i*                    *The Benefactor*. New York: Bard, Avon, 1970. 224 pp.  
May be identical to [A1b](#).
- A1j*                    *The Benefactor*. New York: FS&G, 1974. ix+273 pp.  
A “second printing” of [A1](#), though the publisher’s name is changed. It was “published simultaneously in Canada,” but no specific Canadian publisher is named.
- A1k*                    *El benefactor*. Barcelona: Editorial Lumen, 1974. 297 pp.  
A Spanish translation of [A1](#).
- A1l*                    *The Benefactor*. New York: Delta, Dell, 1978. ix+273 pp.
- \**A1m*                    *Välgöraren: Roman*. Trans. (Swed.) Margareta Ullberg. Uppsala: Bromberg, 1980. 277 pp.
- A1n*                    *The Benefactor*. London: Writers & Readers, 1983. ix+ 273 pp.
- A1o*                    *The Benefactor*. New York: FS&G; Toronto: Collins Publishers, 1987. ix+273 pp.
- \**A1p*                    *De weldoener*. Trans. (Dutch) Caspar Hendriks. Baarn: De Prom, Anthos, 1989. 272 pp.
- A1q*                    *O benfeitor*. Trans. (Port.) Ana Maria Capovilla. Porto Alegre, Brazil: L&PM Editores, 1989 [1990]. 265 pp.
- A1r*                    *The Benefactor*. New York: Anchor, Doubleday, 1991. ix +273 pp.
- \**A1s*                    *Der Wohltäter*. Trans. (Ger.) Louise Eisler-Fischer. Frankfurt am Main: Fischer, 1993. 286 pp.

A2 *Against Interpretation and Other Essays*. New York: FS&G; Toronto: Ambassador, 1966. ix+304 pp.

“A Note and Some Acknowledgments.” Eschews a summary of the book’s “cohesive point of view”; what began as a collection of criticism—acts of “intellectual disburdenment”—became a series of “case studies for an aesthetic, a theory of [her] own sensibility,” without which the challenge “to prevailing standards of taste falls into arbitrariness.”

A table of contents organizes A2 into five segments: (1) “Against Interpretation” and “On Style”; (2) “The Artist as Exemplary Sufferer” through “Nathalie Sarraute and the Novel”; (3) “Ionesco” through “Marat/Sade/Artaud”; (4) “Spiritual Style in the Films of Robert Bresson” through “A Note on Novels and Films”; (5) “Piety without Content” through “One Culture and the New Sensibility.”

“Against Interpretation” (B15). Comprises ten numbered segments. (1) Contrasts the “incantatory” *experience* of art with explanatory *theories*. Mimetic theories (Plato, Aristotle) separate “something we have learned to call ‘form’” from “something we have learned to call ‘content,’” the latter understood either as “picture” or “statement.” (2) Putting content first overemphasizes the “never consummated project of *interpretation*.” (3) As a conscious practice—vs. Nietzschean perspectivism—interpretation “translates,” allegorizing away disquieting textual anomalies. Modern (Freudian, Marxian) interpretation allegorizes to the point of excavation, “and as it excavates, destroys.” (4) It is thus the “revenge of intellect upon art” and “upon the world” itself, no longer “*the* world” but “*this* world.” (5) Literature is especially vulnerable, though modern interpretation treats work “of every quality” and medium. (6) Certain artists and works solicit interpretation (Tennessee Williams, Cocteau), but the value of their accomplishments “certainly lies elsewhere than in their ‘meanings.’” (7) Interpretation may be avoided by means of parody or abstraction. Film in its directness is especially well suited to “elude the interpreters.” Moreover, film has a “vocabulary” of discussable forms, by contrast with the formally uninspired efforts of contemporary American novelists and playwrights. (8) A criticism that would dissolve “considerations of content into those of form” is suggested by Erwin Panofsky, Northrop Frye, Roland Barthes, etc. Also valuable would be a “criticism which would supply a really accurate, sharp, loving description” of the artwork. (9) Though interpretation may once have been entitled to take “the sensory experience of the work of art for granted,” it “cannot be taken for granted, now,” not in a “culture based on excess.” (10) “In place of a hermeneutics we need an erotics of art.”

“On Style” (B17). Comprises twenty-four unnumbered segments. (1) Though critics “avow that style and content are indissoluble,” in critical practice “the old antithesis lives on.” (2–3) Though “there is no neutral, absolutely transparent style,” no style-less art, criticism continues to treat style as a quantity (as thick or thin) or as superadded or exterior, when in fact “The matter, the subject, is on the outside; the style is on the inside.” (4–5) Because “antipathy to ‘style’” is always

to a particular style, style can be historicized. Some “styles”—Mannerism, Art Nouveau—oppose matter to manner via “stylization,” which can lead to exhaustion or self-cancellation, though excessiveness can also provide a “valid and valuable satisfaction,” as in “camp” taste. (6) “Content” is, itself, a “stylistic convention” with formal functions. (7) “Until this function is acknowledged,” critics will continue to take artworks not as objects but as “statements.” Because the “conceptual” or “representational” aspect of an artwork is on hold, artworks exhibit “the form or style of knowing something, rather than a knowledge of something” and they depend upon “the cooperation of the person having the experience.” (8–10) The antipathy to style presumes a false opposition between art and morality, “As if during the experience one really had to choose between responsible and humane conduct, on the one hand, and the pleasurable stimulation of consciousness, on the other!” (11) Moral approval of what a work of art “says” is as extraneous to great art as is sexual arousal (which allows a distinction between art and pornography); if art excites, “the excitation is appeased, within the terms of the aesthetic experience.” Because neither artworks nor the world have “content,” they “need no justification.” (12–14) Lives and artworks are singular, self-justifying—by contrast with morality, which depends upon the utility of actions. Art “nourishes” consciousness, which is “wider and more various than action.” (15–18) “Art is the objectifying of the [artist’s] will in a thing or performance, and the provoking or arousing of the will” of the spectator. Art is (per Bayer) a “schematized and disengaged memory of a volition,” less (per Nietzsche) an imitation of nature than its “metaphysical supplement,” an abolition of the world and its (re)encounter at a (certain) “distance,” the manipulations of which constitute the work’s “style.” Art embodies “attitudes toward the will” by “naming” emotions, thereby inventing them, however arbitrarily. (19–21) The only “inevitable” element of an artwork is its “style,” the “idiom” in which the artist “deploys the *forms* of his art.” Among the formal functions of style is the “mnemonic function”; redundancies (like rhyme) preserve the work, though modern works often challenge this possibility. (22–23) Style also functions epistemologically; because artworks focus or narrow our attention, they also call attention to “the ineffable,” to what is excluded or avoided—to silences. (24) Because any “deviation” from utility can invoke aesthetic appreciation, talk about style is not limited merely to the appreciation of aesthetic objects.

“The Artist as Exemplary Sufferer” (D4). Describes the “unemotional” style of Cesare Pavese’s fiction the better to consider his contribution to the diary as a modern literary genre that evinces our “modern preoccupation with psychology.” The artist, rather than the saint, is now “the exemplary sufferer,” and the writer is the artist “able best to express his suffering.” In Pavese, the diarist’s “uninhibited display of egotism” becomes “an heroic quest” for self-cancellation; his diaries speak not of “I” but “you,” the self not described but addressed. Daily life is generally avoided in favor of “prospective” self-assessments (of his talents as writer, as lover, as potential suicide) and “retrospective” commentaries on

writing, of others, and his own. Two recurrent “prospects” make Pavese almost a case study of de Rougemont’s theses on love as “romantic agony”: Pavese’s interest in suicide, and his interest in love as “an essential fiction.” Taking two, love fails as an expression of selfhood or solitude; when the beloved exhibits “perfect behavior,” entailing absolute indifference, love is necessarily “unrequited.” Argues, contra de Rougemont, that modern love is not a form of spiritual heresy, not in a Judeo-Christian context, where love and suffering are deeply connected. Wanting to feel, we suffer, of which literature and sexual love are “the two most exquisite sources.”

“Simone Weil” (D5). Contrasts the “impersonal” tone of “liberal bourgeois civilization” to the “obsessive, and impolite” tone of “intellectual ardor” that characterizes the “culture heroes” of our era—like Simone Weil—whom we read “for their personal authority, for the example of their seriousness, for their manifest willingness to sacrifice themselves for their truths, and—only piecemeal—for their ‘views.’” Weil in her mystery and martyrdom is an “aesthetic” saint, a figure less to be emulated than to be nourished by.

“Camus’ *Notebooks*” (B5). Comprises two unnumbered segments. (1) Distinguishes writers who exhibit the “husbandly” virtues of “reliability, intelligibility, generosity, decency” from the dangerous “mad lovers” characteristic of literary modernism. Though he trafficked “in the madmen’s themes,” Camus did so with such humane “reasonableness” as to have earned (contra Kafka, Joyce) “real affection” from his readers. First rate in “Neither art nor thought,” Camus’s appeal to readers is “beauty of another order, moral beauty,” which is extremely “perishable.” Though Camus *did* act most admirably (in the French Resistance, in denouncing the Communist Party), his was a temperament of “noble feeling in search of noble acts”; the “disjunction” was his great subject. It is the “pathos” of his modernity that Camus suffered this paradox with dignity, but at the cost of an odd “Impersonality.” (2) Despite his active life, in his *Notebooks* Camus portrays the writer as a (willful) solitary and provides ironic proof that, despite the moral beauty of his life, “Today only the work remains.”

“Michel Leiris’ *Manhood*” (D12). Understands the literary appeal of Leiris’s autobiographical narrative as depending on its “animus to the idea of literature.” Unlike the confessional writings of Montaigne (among others), *Manhood* is “obscene and repulsive,” emphasizing the author’s “wormy failures and deficiencies” to the exclusion of his public success as poet and anthropologist; it is through his “unstated rejection of the rationalist project of self-understanding” that Leiris most contributes to it—as if seeking to prove, “not that he is heroic,” like Mailer, “but that he is at all.” *Manhood* is “hermetic and opaque,” hence an occasion for acknowledging “certain uses of boredom [as of silence] as one of the most creative stylistic features of modern literature.”

“The Anthropologist as Hero” (B6). Comprises two unnumbered segments. (1) Because “acceleration of historical change” leads to “intellectual vertigo,” modern man resorts to “applied Hegelianism: seeking its Self in its Other.” An

exemplar of this “intellectual homelessness” is Claude Lévi-Strauss, especially in *Tristes Tropiques*. Anthropology à la Lévi-Strauss is both intellectual and virile; it “conquers the estranging function of the intellect by institutionalizing it”; the anthropologist is “a ‘critic at home’ but a ‘conformist elsewhere,’” hence is never “at home.” Though anthropology has always “struggled with an intense, fascinated *repulsion* towards its subject,” Lévi-Strauss “marks the furthest reach of the conquering of the aversion” by insisting on fieldwork as a “psychological ordeal,” complemented by a rigorously self-effacing linguistics-inspired formalism. Versus “naturalistic” anthropology, which assumes universal functions, Lévi-Strauss occupies himself only with the arbitrary “formal features which differentiate one society from another.” (2) Lévi-Strauss is the antithesis of Sartre; where Sartre is the philosophical and political “enthusiast,” Lévi-Strauss evinces “the cult of aloofness.” Like Robbe-Grillet, Lévi-Strauss plays “structure” against “an immense but thoroughly subdued pathos” in order to “purge” it. In refusing to privilege “history,” Lévi-Strauss urges a “vision of freedom in which man would finally be freed from the obligation to progress.”

“The Literary Criticism of Georg Lukács” (B14). Comprises two unnumbered segments and a postscript. (1) Though Lukács “speaks a Marxism that it is possible for intelligent non-Marxists to take seriously” his “exile” from modern literature, via his moralistic devotion to nineteenth-century realist fiction and to German, asserts “genuinely European” values. (2) Takes the later Lukács’s condemnation of both “modernism” and “social realism” as too dependent on coarse arguments grounded in a crudely mimetic view of literature. The 1965 “Postscript” links Lukács to other “neo-Marxist” critics (Adorno, Benjamin) who suffer under the dogma of an outmoded ideology—“humanism”—that brands most modern art “reactionary.” What gets lost in such judgments is the notion of art as “autonomous” form, without which a sympathetic response to contemporary art is impossible.

“Sartre’s *Saint Genet*” (D7). Takes Sartre as evincing the compulsiveness of philosophical consciousness. Sartre disembowels Genet in order to “exhibit his own philosophical style,” which seeks to escape meaning by assigning it, interpreting it, thus to act “intentionally.” Sees Genet as similarly engaged in “the imaginative annihilation of the world,” hence Sartre’s praise of Genet’s employment of “abjection” as a philosophical method à la Descartes, Hegel, and Husserl. Where Sartre’s Baudelaire “needed bourgeois morality to condemn him,” Sartre’s Genet achieves “sanctity” by embracing his status as outcast “Other,” thus choosing himself, pushing “beyond the self.” In using Genet to look beyond psychology, Sartre “has glimpsed something of the autonomy of the aesthetic,” though Genet’s phenomenological gambit amounts to philosophical masturbation: solitary, fugitive, pleasurable.

“Nathalie Sarraute and the Novel” (B4). Comprises two unnumbered segments. (1) Describes the equivocal “victory of the modern didacticism” that decrees “art must evolve.” Compared to music and painting, the novel “lags well in the rear of the battlefield.” The novel’s devotion to nineteenth-century

standards of realism and psychology makes the novel “the most open of all art forms,” hence the least interesting and formally progressive. The giants of the novel are those (like Joyce, Proust) “who close off rather than inaugurate” new styles. Thus critics may need to “force” the issue by demanding “new pleasures.” Change is evident in the literary and critical work of writers like Bataille and Sarraute who (variously) reject the notion of “psychology.” (2) Compares Sarraute’s view of the novel in *The Age of Suspicion* to Virginia Woolf’s and Mary McCarthy’s. Though critical of “psychology,” what Sarraute really objects to is “character” and “plot.” She advocates instead “immersion” into “the direct and purely sensory contact with things and persons which the ‘I’ of the novelist experiences.” By replacing one psychology with another, Sarraute confirms a representational view of art, a subjective view of truth, and an overly grim view of aesthetic pleasure. A better view of these matters is Robbe-Grillet’s, especially his demolition of the form vs. content shibboleth.

“Ionesco” (D15). Observes the “watered-down Artaud” banality of Ionesco’s *Notes and Counter Notes*. The interest of Ionesco’s self-contradictory ideas about theater resides in what they reveal “about the puzzling thinness” of his plays. Though his early work followed from “his discovery of the poetry of banality”—adopting a view of language as seen “from the outside”—his later plays are marred by “a theory about the meaning” of his plays, “a set of crude, simplistic attitudes.” Though Ionesco attacks his characters for lacking an emotional “inner life,” he praises his own “inability to feel” for “rescuing him” from becoming “a mass man.” Ionesco’s sensibility is finally misanthropic and anti-intellectual, a complacency he covers over with “fashionable clichés of cultural diagnosis.”

“Reflections on *The Deputy*” (B13). Comprises two unnumbered segments. (1) The holocaust is “The supreme tragic event of modern times.” But “tragic” implies (after Aristotle) something beyond fact; the “tragic” event is “of an exemplary or edifying nature that imposes a solemn duty [of memory] upon the survivors.” Though tragedies are no longer written, various “unacknowledged art forms” (the psychoanalytic session, the parliamentary debate) have assumed the duty to “reflect or resolve the great historical tragedies of our time.” A crucial example is the trial of Adolf Eichmann, which did not always “work” as tragic art because of “the contradiction between its juridical form and its dramatic function.” A more conventionally theatrical work that essays the same memorial function is Rolf Hochhuth’s *The Deputy*. By the standard of “truth,” *The Deputy* “is an important play” about the Nazi era. But it is “not play writing of the highest order.” Its language as translated is flat and overly expository. And Hochhuth’s stage directions risk undermining the play’s “factual authority.” (2) The riots that accompanied the play’s European productions indicate the site “between art and life” that it occupies. Though Hochhuth’s staging implies the interchangeability of persons and roles, the two main characters demonstrate the contrary by opposing Nazism.

“The Death of Tragedy” (D6). Comprises two unnumbered segments. (1) To mourn the death of a literary form names “the lost potential of sensibility and attitude which the defunct form incarnated.” Since Nietzsche’s *The Birth of Tragedy*, such ceremonies have either mourned the death of tragedy or tried “to make ‘modern tragedy’ out of the naturalistic-sentimental theater of Ibsen and Chekhov, of O’Neill, Miller, and Williams.” In *Metatheatre*, Lionel Abel expounds “a continental argument” on “the tribulations of subjectivity” and cuts short the mourning by observing that self-consciousness is inimical to tragedy and that self-conscious plays—“metadramas”—have been the primary dramatic form of Western culture since Shakespeare and Calderon. (2) Urges three qualifications: that Abel fails to consider the metatheatrical potential of comedy; that his equation of tragedy and morality is mistaken (“It is not the implacability of ‘values’ which is demonstrated by tragedy, but the implacability of the world”); and that Abel’s “metatheatre” category risks obscuring “differences in range and tone” among playwrights as disparate as Shakespeare, Genet, Beckett, and Brecht, especially the latter, for whom Abel’s category is decidedly misleading.

“Going to Theater, Etc.” (B8, B9). Two segments review the 1964 New York theater scene. (1) Contrasts the “public” and “private” strains of modern drama. Miller’s *After the Fall* evinces the “weak-minded” “public voice” because the public issues it confronts (Communism, the holocaust) “are treated as the furniture of a mind,” reducing all issues to the same level, creating a reality its hero passively suffers, thereby exonerating both the every-manish character and the audience. A similar “complicity” with what it professes to attack characterizes O’Neill’s *Marco Millions*. By contrast, the failure of Hochhuth’s *The Deputy* is attributable less to the playwright than to the “Broadway Blender” production, which refuses “to dramatize anything really painful.” Sees the hope for intelligent theater more in comedy than “serious” drama. Compares Chaplin’s *The Great Dictator* to Kubrick’s *Dr. Strangelove*; each uses a single actor (Chaplin, Sellers) playing multiple roles to “distance” audiences and deflect attention from the “shallowness” of its political vision. Describes Daniel Talbot and Emile de Antonio’s *Point of Order* docu-comedy reconstruction of the 1954 Army-McCarthy hearings as the “only successful spectacle shown this winter dealing with public issues.” (2) Meditates on the most “ancient device of the drama: personifications, masks.” Contrasts politically optimistic “Broadway liberalism,” for which “the Jew” was the primary mask of “victimage,” with contemporary “Broadway racism” in James Baldwin’s *Blues for Mister Charlie* and LeRoi Jones’s *The Dutchman*, for which “the Negro” and “the white” provide the primary figures of “virtue and vice.” While no one “would wish the old masks back,” the visibility of “the Negro” emphasizes “the fatality of racial antagonisms.” Enthusiastic reception of these plays by white audiences evokes Nietzsche’s theory of “resentment” as applying to the politics of sexuality—as if white oppression of blacks were a (guilty) symptom of (white) sexual inferiority. Displacement is also evident in Baldwin (where race tropes sex) and Jones (where race tropes class). “Wholly comic use of the mask” is evident in

productions of Frank O'Hara's *The General Returns from One Place to Another* and LeRoi Jones's *The Baptism*, both of which feature Taylor Mead who, like the great silent comics, "just gives himself, wholly and without reserve, to some bizarre autistic fantasy." Also sees the "vitality and joy" of theater in Rosalyn Drexler's *Home Movies*. Contrasts John Gielgud's production of *Hamlet* and Peter Brook's of *King Lear*; where the former is "absolutely nude, without any interpretation," the latter is over-interpreted, "laden with ideas."

"Marat/Sade/Artaud" (B16). Comprises three unnumbered segments. (1) Reviews the Peter Brook production of Peter Weiss's *Marat/Sade* with special focus on "insanity" as a theatrical "metaphor for passion." *Marat/Sade* is a play of ideas in that "Intellectual debate is the material of the play...not its subject or its end." (2) Gauges the Brook/Weiss production against three "ready made ideas" that underlie most objections to it: that theater is a branch of literature; that drama consists of the (psychological) revelation of character; that artworks are to be understood "as being 'about' or representing or arguing for an 'idea.'" Contends there is a "theater of the senses" that goes "beyond" a realistic character "psychology" to express "transpersonal emotions" that are "frankly erotic." Contrasts the play with Genet's prose narratives; where Genet shifts concern from the moral to the aesthetic plane, Weiss shifts concern to the "ontological" plane, expanding the "context for human action" to include the "'crimes' of which Sade speaks." (3) Contends that *Marat/Sade* is, despite its Brechtian elements, an exemplary instance of Artaudian aesthetics.

"Spiritual Style in the Films of Robert Bresson" (B10). Comprises six segments. (1-2) Compares Bresson to Brecht (and Fellini) to show how "reflective" (vs. "emotionally immediate") art can nevertheless "exalt the spectator." (3) The reflective emphasis on *form* retards emotions, allowing intellectual pleasures independent of "content." In Bresson, form works "to discipline the emotions at the same time that it arouses them," thus inducing "a state of spiritual balance that is itself the subject of the film." By contrast with Brecht's "alienation effect," which aims "to keep hot emotions cool," Bresson's distancing effects imply that "all identification with characters" is "an affront to the mystery that is human action and the human heart." (4) Bresson's "form" is less visual than narrative; voice-over narration often "doubles" the visual presentation of an event. The effect is to "punctuate the scene with intervals," an "anti-dramatic" flouting of suspense. Bresson also rejects the "expressiveness" of acting on the grounds that film "transforms" performance via montage or context. (5) Bresson's films "have a common theme: the meaning of confinement and liberty," the ultimate "cell" in Bresson being the "self." Yet Bresson's interiority "does not mean *psychology*," which is "superficial" by contrast with his "physics of the soul." Like Simone Weil, Bresson seeks the void, "grace," a detachment from self and from others. "And the instrument of this fight is the idea of work, a project, a task." (6) Like Cocteau, Bresson thus depicts "spiritual style," but where Cocteau is "aesthetic" Bresson is "ascetic." His visual style becomes "more chaste," less dramatic, as his sensibility evolves; by

using amateur actors he renounces “the beautiful,” though his characters may *become* beautiful exactly by their “unself-consciousness.” “For Bresson, art is the discovery of what is necessary—of that, and nothing more.”

“Godard’s *Vivre Sa Vie*” (B12). Comprises a Preface, a Note, seventeen segments, and an Appendix. (Preface) Takes *Vivre Sa Vie* as instancing the “purest, most sophisticated sense in which a work of art can be ‘about’ ideas.” (Note) Expands the career sketch of the Preface to cover Godard’s first ten feature films. (1–2) Construes Godard’s *Vivre Sa Vie* in light of Cocteau’s notion of *proof*, a film’s capacity “to be indisputable with respect to the actions it determines.” (3–4) Proof, like art, “is always formal”; art’s “subject” is the form of events and consciousness, and “Its means are formal” as well. (5–6) As formal demonstrations, “Godard’s films are drastically untopical.” (7–10) What *Vivre Sa Vie* “proves” is not (après Cocteau) an “aliqueness of images” or “a total sensuous whole.” Godard seeks to embody “lucidity” by means of fragmentation, “the dissociation of word and image,” in ways that recall film’s silent era and Bresson alike. (11–3) Textual lucidity and disburdenment are explored in both subject matter (Nana/Anna Karina drops out of marriage and retail sales, into theater, cinema, and prostitution) and expressive means (Godard “dropping out” of Hollywood, into Dreyer, Plato, Poe). (14–5) This antipsychological elucidation of self and cinema progresses by paradox, pointed to by the film’s motto: “Lend yourself to others; give yourself to yourself.” For Nana, the transaction is literalized as prostitution; for Godard, the paradox involves a systematic proliferation of texts (musical, cinematic, literary) leading to increasing dissociation, sound from image, idea from feeling. (16–7) Godard confirms the lucid form of his film idea by silencing “Nana” in the film’s finale. Like Poe’s painter of oval portraits, Godard piles on detail, but thereby “kills” his wife. Sontag objects to this imposition of an extra-filmic causality, but still praises Godard as “the first director fully to grasp the fact that, in order to deal seriously with ideas, one must create a new film language.” (Appendix) Prints the concrete poem used to promote the film’s Paris release.

“The Imagination of Disaster” (B21). Comprises nine unnumbered segments. (1–3) Sketches out various “predictable” science fiction scenarios. (4) Discusses the film subgenre separately because, while short on “science,” such films excel in the “sensuous elaboration” of the “extraordinary,” are about “destruction” on a grand scale. Science fiction films share the pleasures of “mass havoc” with horror films. Older sci-fi serials share with comic books a “romantic” relation to disaster. But modern science fiction films, by virtue of scale and visual credibility, are less innocent. “Generalized disaster” is alluring because it “releases one from normal obligations,” allowing expression “to cruel or at least amoral feelings.” Science fiction differs from horror by inviting “a dispassionate, aesthetic view of destruction and violence,” in part because *things* in a technological world are “the sources of power” and value. (5–6) Science fiction films “are strongly moralistic,” especially as regards “mad” science or scientists; technocrats are more trustworthy. But where earlier “scientists” (Prospero, Dr.

Faustus) only threatened localities, the post-nuclear equivalent works on a “planetary, cosmic” scale. (7) The kinship of science fiction to war films indicates hunger for a “good war.” But the fantasy of a world united, in technological combat with interplanetary invaders, indicates a “Utopian” element of the genre. (8) Alongside such yearnings lurks “the deepest anxieties about contemporary existence,” fear of the “impersonal,” of having one’s body taken over, which invokes the “very model of technocratic man.” This ambivalence is denied by attributing the abuses, not to social conditions, but to individual scientists. Where most cultures have myths that mediate questions of sanity and mortality, science fiction films magnify such questions by raising them on a global scale. The “imagery” of that allegory—the pleasure we take in “the imagination of disaster”—indicates “an *inadequate response*.” (9) While fantasy can beautify the world, it can also “neutralize” it. Though “thinking about the unthinkable” is morally questionable, such thoughts are unavoidable when the fantasy is “too close to our reality.”

“Jack Smith’s *Flaming Creatures*” (D14). Comprises two unnumbered segments. (1) Defends Smith against censorious attack (“Smith’s images of sex are alternately childlike and witty” rather than pornographically arousing) and against the “positively alienating” pronouncements of New American Cinema advocates. Contra Jonas Mekas, Smith’s film is not “a totally unprecedented departure in the history of cinema.” It instances “a particular tradition, the poetic cinema of shock.” *Flaming Creatures* evinces the “cliché of European romanticism” that equates primitive technique with spontaneity and sincerity, but it is not off-putting because “there is an extraordinary charge and beauty” to Smith’s images; it is less commentary than “a treat for the senses.” (2) Though *Flaming Creatures* has “for its subject” the “poetry of transvestism,” it is much more a Bosch-like celebration of “intersexual, polymorphous joy” set against a textual background “drawn from corny movies” and “‘camp’ lore.” *Flaming Creatures* thus exists not in a moral but an “aesthetic space, the space of pleasure.”

“Resnais’ *Muriel*” (D10). Comprises two unnumbered segments. (1) Understands the difficulty of *Muriel* by reference to Resnais’s preceding films. Like *Hiroshima, Mon Amour*, it concerns “the weight of the inescapably remembered past”; like *L’Année Dernière à Marienbad*, it reduces “the claim of the past” via abstraction. *Muriel* “suggests an elaborate plot and complex interrelationships,” but presented undramatically. Shot composition, photography, and editing “decompose” the story, pulling the viewer “away from” rather than “into” the narrative. Because his films are about “the *inexpressible*,” their dialogue also yields frustration and alienation. (2) This effort at obscuring narrative links Resnais with the French new novel. “The typical formula of the new formalists” is “coldness enclosing and subduing an immense pathos.” In Resnais’s *Night and Fog* the formula “works brilliantly” in avoiding the danger that its subject matter “can numb, instead of stir, our feelings.” But the history in his fiction films is “both unassimilable and dubious”; his subject is “not ‘a

memory,' but 'remembering.'" This central "confusion" is least noticeable in *Marienbad*, where pathos involves an (ahistorical) "erotic frustration" raised "to the level of meta-emotion." In *Muriel*, Resnais abstracts via the concrete, "the real everyday world." Compositional rigor, rapid cutting, intense colors: all give "an unpleasant feeling of clutteredness." Resnais's films are "overburdened and synthetic" because they "do not go to the end, either of the idea or of the emotion which inspires them."

"A Note on Novels and Films" (B2). Adduces "useful analogies" relating cinema and the novel. Cinema recapitulates in "scrambled" form the history of the novel; each begins in the work of an innovative genius of "supreme vulgarity" (Richardson, Griffith) who nevertheless exhibited an "extraordinary capacity for representing the most tremulous feminine sentiments." Novel and film are also alike in controlling audience access to narration via selection. Cinema history is foreshortened; it is a "a kind of pan-art" that can "raid" other forms. It is thus "a fruitfully conservative medium of ideas and styles of emotion" by contrast with "recent sophisticated novels." Distinguishing "literary" from "visual" film artists is less useful than distinguishing "analytic" from "descriptive" or "expository" directors—a distinction between "psychological" and "antipsychological" approaches to narration that applies as well to fiction.

"Piety without Content" (B3). Reviews *Religion from Tolstoy to Camus*, edited by Walter Kaufmann, as symptomatic of a post-Nietzschean "religiosity" without faith. Religion's decline allows us "to look on sympathetically and derive nourishment from whatever one can find to admire"—which makes "religion," like art, a matter of "spectatorship." Critiques Kaufmann's implicit equation of "religion" and "the theistic proposition," which implies the possibility of a "generalized" religiosity. But "one cannot be religious in general any more than one can speak language in general." Nor can we salvage the "critical" or "prophetic" aspect of religion by generalizing, because "one cannot detach criticism from its roots" or antagonists. Though attempts "to work out the serious consequences of atheism" have been made (Nietzsche, Cioran), "Modern seriousness" is ill-served "when we blur all boundaries and call it religious, too."

"Psychoanalysis and Norman O. Brown's *Life Against Death*" (B1). Contrasts Brown's engagements with Freud to those of "right wing scholasticism" and left wing Freudian "revisionists." "Official" American appropriations of Freud are "so bland" as to make psychoanalysis seem conformist. "Revisionist" Freudianism—by contrast with Brown and Marcuse—is also a weak response to Freud for asserting "the claims of love" contra an "anxious, television-brainwashed America." In their insistence on the sexual body, Brown and Marcuse are "truer to Freud." But where Freud sides with repression and "self consciousness," Brown envisions the "transformation of the human ego into a body ego, and the resurrection of the body that is promised in Christian mysticism" and Nietzschean eschatology—but Brown's immanence is available to everyone, not just "the masters."

“Happenings: An Art of Radical Juxtaposition” (B18). The “most striking feature of the Happening” is the almost “abusive” treatment of the audience. Happenings are temporally “unpredictable,” dreamlike. Having no plot, “no past,” Happenings “are always in the present tense.” Happenings are also (unlike theater) impermanent; there is no text or score. “What is primary in a Happening is materials.” People are treated as objects rather than as “characters.” Physical actions are emphasized—violent, sensual. Objects “are not *placed*, but rather scattered about and heaped together” in an “environment”—as a protest “against the museum conception of art.” Happenings are a logical development of the large-scale, assemblage-style 1950s New York paintings, which sought to project “a three-dimensional form.” Happenings also inherit the “aggressive” antitraditions of surrealism, which can serve the purpose of “wit,” or of “camp,” as evidenced by Simone de Beauvoir’s description of the 1938 International Surrealist Exhibition. Surrealism can also be therapeutically terrifying, as in Artaud, whose “theater of cruelty” would transcend “the burden and limitations of personal individuality” via “the preeminently collective contents of dreaming.” Despite their surrealistic appeal to fear, Happenings typically operate “with images of anesthetized persons”—at which point surrealist terror links up with “the deepest meaning of comedy: the assertion of invulnerability.” Happenings give rise to demonic laughter “to the extent that modern experience is characterized by meaningless mechanized situations.” In fulfilling Artaud’s injunction to eliminate “the distance between spectators and performers,” Happenings impose upon their audience the role of the comic scapegoat.

“Notes on ‘Camp’” (B11). Comprises a prologue and fifty-eight numbered “jottings” punctuated by Oscar Wilde epigrams. Because “Camp” is “unnatural” and “esoteric,” writing about it risks betraying it. Sontag is “strongly drawn to Camp, and almost as strongly offended by it.” Because “taste governs every free — as opposed to rote—human response,” nothing is more self-edifying than sketching out the “logic of taste.” (1–6) Camp is “a certain mode of aestheticism,” of style “disengaged” and “depoliticized.” Camp is also an objective property, especially in the visual or decorative arts. Certain art forms or artists are “too important” or “good” to be Camp. (7–17) Because “Nothing in nature can be campy,” all camp objects and persons are artificial, “attenuated” and “exaggerated”: “things-being-what-they-are-not,” as in art nouveau, or persons, via Camp’s propensity for androgyny. Because of its “extraordinary feeling for artifice,” the eighteenth century is an apt place to begin a “pocket history of Camp.” By the nineteenth century, Camp “takes on overtones of the acute, the esoteric, the perverse.” Camp sensibility “is alive to a double sense in which some things can be taken,” the “straight” or “public sense” and a “zany private experience of the thing.” (18–22) Distinguishes between “Pure Camp” (which is “unintentional”) and “deliberate Camp.” When self-parody becomes self-contempt (as in Hitchcock), the results are “rarely Camp.” Camp thus “discloses innocence, but also, when it can, corrupts it”—as in Oscar Wilde. (23–33) Failed seriousness becomes Camp when it has “the proper mixture” of

exaggeration and naïveté. Because we sometimes fail to see fantasies too close to our own, “the canon of Camp can change” as time enhances the fantastic element of an object. Camp prizes the incandescent “unity” of “instant character”; Garbo’s “incompetence” as an actress thus enhances her camp standing. (34–44) “Camp taste turns its back on the good-bad axis of ordinary aesthetic judgment.” Where “high culture” is “basically moralistic,” and avant-garde art creates “a tension between moral and aesthetic passion,” camp aestheticism refuses both morality and “extreme states of feeling.” In its aesthetic detachment, “Camp proposes a comic vision of the world.” (45–9) Camp is a modern form of elitism. Conservative in some ways, Wilde’s dandyism anticipates “the democratic *esprit* of Camp,” its delighted appreciation of “vulgarity” as an alternative to boredom. (50–3) As urban Jews are to “liberal and reformist causes,” so are urban gays to Camp. Camp is “a gesture of self-legitimation” that “neutralizes moral indignation” and “sponsors playfulness.” “Yet one feels that if homosexuals hadn’t more or less invented Camp, someone else would” in a world where “the adoption of style” is becoming increasingly “questionable” and difficult. (54–8) “Camp taste supervenes upon good taste as a daring and witty hedonism,” “a mode of enjoyment, of appreciation—not judgment.” Unlike the nihilism of pop art, camp taste “nourishes itself” on “love.”

“One Culture and the New Sensibility” (B19). Comprises two unnumbered segments. (1) Challenges the “two cultures” argument for assuming that “science and technology are changing, in motion, while the arts are static.” Art is increasingly becoming “the terrain of specialists” in its abstruseness and the education needed for appreciation. This is less a conflict of cultures than “the creation of a new (potentially unitary) kind of sensibility.” The high art/low art distinction—the former associated with uniqueness and expressiveness, the latter with mass production—thus gives way before the “impersonality” of contemporary art, which reasserts the artwork’s status as “object.” The “two cultures” claim equates culture with literature, which is preeminent due to its “heavy burden of ‘content,’ both reportage and moral judgment.” By contrast with Arnold’s “art as the criticism of life” notion, the new extensions of human capacity described by Marshall McLuhan construe “art as the extension of life—this being understood as the representation of (new) modes of vivacity.” Because art (per Buckminster Fuller) “now operates in an environment which cannot be grasped by the senses,” modern art functions “as a kind of shock therapy for both confounding and unclosing our senses.” (2) The new art encourages an “anti-hedonistic” attitude toward pleasure, in the sense that “Having one’s sensorium challenged or stretched hurts.” Yet the new sensibility “demands less ‘content’ in art,” is therefore “more open to the pleasures of ‘form’ and style.”

*A2a*                      *Against Interpretation and Other Essays*. New York: Noontday; Toronto: Ambassador, 1966. ix+304 pp.

- A second hardcover edition of [A2](#), with Noonday listed first, though as “a division of Farrar, Straus & Giroux.”
- A2b* *Against Interpretation and Other Essays*. London: Eyre & Spottiswoode, 1967. 304 pp.  
A British edition of [A2](#). The “Preface to The English Edition and Acknowledgments” expands the first two paragraphs of “A Note and Some Acknowledgments” to three. Reference is made to [A1](#) and to the controversy occasioned by the publication of “Notes on ‘Camp.’” The practice of the essays is now described less as criticism than “meta-criticism.” The acknowledgments appear in list form, and the final two paragraphs of the [A2](#) “Note” are dropped.
- \*A2c* *Against Interpretation and Other Essays*. New York: Delta, Dell, 1967. ix+304 pp.  
Per [A2p](#), the “Note to the Paperback Edition” found here includes language that first appeared in the [A2b](#) Preface, while leaving the [A2](#) acknowledgments portion intact. (We have never had this 1967 printing in hand, though we have seen any number of reimpresions, some of which—the seventh, say—bear no date later than 1966.)
- \*A2d* *Contro l'interpretazione*. Trans. (Ital.) Ettore Capriolo. Milan: Mondadori, 1967. 399 pp.
- A2e* *Kunst und Antikunst: 24 literarische Analysen*. Trans. (Ger.) Mark W.Rien. Reinbek bei Hamburg: Rowohlt, 1968.315pp.  
Several [A2](#) essays are dropped from [A2e](#); newly included are “The Pornographic Imagination” ([B30](#)), “William Burroughs und der Roman,” and “Theatre and Film” ([B25](#)). [A2](#) has five numbered sections; *Kunst und Antikunst* has four, arranged as follows (per their [A2](#) or [A5](#) titles): (1) “Against Interpretation,” “On Style” “The Pornographic Imagination”; (2) “The Artist as Exemplary Sufferer,” “Simone Weil,” “Camus’ *Notebooks*,” “Michel Leiris’ *Manhood*,” “The Anthropologist as Hero,” “Sartre’s *Saint Genet*,” “Nathalie Sarraute and the Novel,” “William Burroughs und der Roman”; (3) “Ionesco,” “Reflections on *The Deputy*,” “The Death of Tragedy,” “Marat/Sade/ Artaud,” “Theatre and Film,” “Spiritual Style in the Films of Robert Bresson,” “Resnais’ *Muriel*,” “Godard’s *Vivre Sa Vie*,” “The Imagination of Disaster”; (4) “Psychoanalysis and Norman O.Brown’s *Life Against Death*,” “Happenings: An Art of Radical Juxtaposition,” “Notes on ‘Camp,’” and “One Culture and the New Sensibility.”  
“William Burroughs und der Roman.” A German translation of portions of “Literature” ([B23](#)). Though only a few transition

sentences are added, the reconfiguration leads to different emphases than those on view in the [B23](#) annotation. (All quotations draw from the English text.) Takes the Anglo-American literary tradition and readership as more interested in reality journalistically mirrored than in the formalist innovations of modernist writers like Joyce, Woolf, Beckett, etc. Emphasizes the “cultivation of chance” as one means of discarding or fragmenting the traditional “story” or “plot,” resulting in an “absolute” communication in which (à la Blanchot) “speech and silence coexist.” Another technique is the ironic recycling of “calcified, obvious, standard types of narration.” Grants William Burroughs “priority” as the contemporary exemplar of these trends. Criticizes Robbe-Grillet’s literature of pure (message-less) description as depending upon “the old shibboleth of art versus life” that encourages a denial of literary history. In claiming to be “efficacious” in altering the consciousness of his readers, Burroughs points to the sense in which “the persuasive, didactic, and regenerative functions of serious art are not separate from the way art functions as distraction, as entertainment, as autonomous play of the mind and senses.”

*A2f* *L'oeuvre parle*. Trans. (Fr.) Guy Durand. Paris: Seuil, 1968. 340pp.

This volume drops ten essays from [A2](#). “The Porno-graphic Imagination” ([B30](#)) and “Theatre and Film” ([B25](#)) are added. Also included is “William Burroughs et le Roman” (see [A2e](#)). [A2](#) is organized into five numbered sections; *L'oeuvre parle* has four, arranged as follows (per their [A2](#) or [A5](#) titles): (1) “Against Interpretation,” “On Style”; (2) “The Artist as Exemplary Sufferer,” “Michel Leiris’ *Manhood*,” “The Anthropologist as Hero,” “Sartre’s *Saint Genet*,” “William Burroughs et le Roman”; (3) “Ionesco,” “The Death of Tragedy,” “Marat/Sade/Artaud,” “Theatre and Film,” “Spiritual Style in the Films of Robert Bresson,” “Resnais’ *Muriel*,” “Godard’s *Vivre Sa Vie*,” “The Imagination of Disaster”; (4) “The Pornographic Imagination,” “Happenings: An Art of Radical Juxtaposition,” “Notes on ‘Camp,’” “One Culture and the New Sensibility.”

*A2g* *Against Interpretation and Other Essays*. New York: Laurel Edition, Dell, 1969. 304 pp.

This small-format paperback edition of [A2c](#) is completely reset (vs. the FS&G and Delta versions), though it comes to the

- same total page count. (All subsequent English editions we have actually seen include the revised [A2c](#) “Note.”)
- A2h* *Contra la interpretación*. Trans. (Span.) Javier González-Pueyo. Barcelona: Seix Barral, 1969. 358 pp.  
Translates [A2](#), though the essays are not grouped into segments via the contents page or numbered headings.
- A2i* *Kunst och antikonst*. Trans. (Swed.) Erik Sandin. Stockholm: Pan, Norstedt, 1969. 259 pp.  
Drops a number of [A2](#) essays; adds “The Porno-graphic Imagination” ([B30](#)). The five numbered segments of [A2](#) are rearranged as follows (per their [A2](#) or [A5](#) titles): (1) “Against Interpretation,” “On Style”; (2) “The Artist as Exemplary Sufferer,” “Simone Weil,” “Camus’ *Notebooks*,” “Michel Leiris’ *Manhood*,” “The Anthropologist as Hero,” “Sartre’s *Saint Genet*,” “The Pornographic Imagination”; (3) “Ionesco,” “The Death of Tragedy,” “Marat/Sade/Artaud,” “Spiritual Style in the Films of Robert Bresson,” “Resnais’ *Muriel*,” “Godard’s *Vivre Sa Vie*,” “The Imagination of Disaster”; (4) “Psychoanalysis and Norman O.Brown’s *Life Against Death*,” “Happenings: An Art of Radical Juxtaposition,” “Notes on ‘Camp,’” “One Culture and the New Sensibility.”
- \*A2j* *Tegen interpretatie: Essays*. Trans. (Dutch) P.H.H. Hawinkels. Antwerp and Utrecht: Bruna, 1969. 239 pp.
- \*A2k* *Han-kaishaku*. Trans. (Jap.) Yasunari Takahashi et al. Tokyo: Takeuchi shoten, 1971. 360 pp.
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*Interpretazioni tendenziose: Dodici temi culturali*. Trans. (Ital.) Ettore Capriolo. Turin: Einaudi, 1975. vii+337 pp.  
See [A5e](#).
- A2l* *Against Interpretation and Other Essays*. New York: Octagon Books, 1978. ix+304 pp.  
A library binding reprint of [A2](#). Also reprinted in 1982 and 1986, though in the interim between the latter two Octagon Books changed ownership, from FS&G to Hippocrene Books. We consider the 1982 and 1986 publications to be new impressions, not new editions.
- \*A2m* *Kunst und Antikunst: 24 literarische Analysen: Essays*. Trans. (Ger.) Mark W.Rien. Munich: Hanser, 1980. 315 pp.
- A2n* *Kunst und Antikunst: 24 literarische Analysen*. Trans. (Ger.) Mark W.Rien. Frankfurt am Main: Fischer-Taschenbuch-Verlag, 1982. 374pp.  
Includes, as presumably does [A2m](#), the same selection of essays as [A2i](#). Was reprinted in 1989 and 1991.

- A2o *Contra la interpretación y otros ensayos*. Trans. (Span.) Horacio Vásquez Rial. Filmography by Homero Alsina Thevenet. Barcelona: Seix Barral, 1984. 342 pp.  
This translation of A2 is especially accurate to the Delta edition. Some notes are dropped. The “filmography” is an alphabetical list, both originals and Spanish-language variants, of the film titles Sontag refers to.
- A2p *Against Interpretation and Other Essays*. New York: FSG; Toronto: Collins Publishers, 1986. ix+304 pp.  
A paperback reprint of A2c. The “Note to the Paperback Edition” is retained but retitled “A Note and Some Acknowledgments.”
- A2q *Contra a interpretação*. Trans. (Port.) Ana Maria Capovilla. Porto Alegre, Brazil: L&PM Editores, 1986. 350pp.
- A2r *Against Interpretation and Other Essays*. London: Andre Deutsch, 1987. ix+304 pp.
- A2s *Against Interpretation and Other Essays*. New York: Anchor, Doubleday, 1990. ix+304 pp.

A3 *Death Kit*. New York: FS&G; Rexdale, Ont.: Ambassador, 1967. 311pp.

The *Death Kit* story of Dalton Harron (assistant director of advertising for Watkins & Company) is told by an (apparently) omniscient third person in a continuous narrative of (twenty-eight) unnumbered segments.

(1) “Diddy the Good” (or “the Done”) prepares to take a business trip, from Manhattan to Albany, on the “Privateer.” Recounts Diddy’s quietude (now), his hysterical habitation of his life, the fear that oozes, the machine that runs down or blows up—senseless tasks, inhospitable spaces, grotesque people—hands “ensouled” and nourished to kill, September 30, sleeping pills, a Negro orderly, a stomach pump. Diddy’s “hope of being born” is as “fierce as the wish to die.” Vows to go on for sake of younger brother (Paul) and ex-wife (Joan); dreams of encountering both in a (darkening) forest.

(2) First-person pronouns, imperative sentences, and shifts in perspective suggest a *film noir* voice-over, as if Diddy were (posthumously) narrating his own story, talking to himself (now). Passengers in Diddy’s Privateer compartment are described—a whispering woman, a pretty girl wearing sunglasses, a cleric, an odoriferous hypochondriac. Diddy dirties his fingertips; toads and postage stamps; words for the old aunt, eyes for her blind niece, Hester. The train enters a tunnel and stops. Starting “to come undone,” thinking of death and repetition, of cattle and a stone, Diddy leaves the train and confronts an obdurate ax-wielding workman. Ordered to retrace his steps, Diddy seizes a crowbar and kills. “Diddy the Stupefied has never felt more alive.”

(3) Diddy returns (as if blindly) to his compartment. Despite his desire for “a motionless memory,” the journey resumes, through a hallucinatory landscape.

Diddy “must talk” and beckons the blind girl into the corridor. He confesses to have “done something terrible.” Hester denies he ever left the compartment. In the lavatory, Diddy ponders “The white hymen” of Hester’s (blind) eyeball and whether she cried her eyes out, how forgiveness is possible, “his body’s need to weep.” After sex, Diddy tells Hester he (probably) killed the workman. Back in the compartment, Diddy wonders if Hester is right, whether he’s transposed “the transaction of desire with the transaction of violence.” A postage stamp and a distant farmhouse. Diddy gives “his anxiety the form of an enigma.”

(4) In the club car (now), “Diddy the Jealous” asks Hester about her feelings, her life; whether she loves anyone, loves him; about honesty and truth and anger. A silent Diddy sits “with half-shut eyelids” and ponders his imprisonment.

(5) “The compartment again.” Dalton is introduced to Hester Nayburn by Mrs. Nayburn. Though employed by a microscope manufacturer, Diddy wants “to bury” the insinuation “that he lived through his eyes” in deference to Hester. She prefers telescopes to microscopes, in part for hoping to “see the light coming from a dead star.” The murdered workman is Diddy’s dead star, in the past but “still sending forth over long distances” a beam of “lifelike” light. Struggling to distinguish “between dead stars and living stars,” true light and false, Diddy envies Hester her “prodigious truth.”

(6) Diddy escorts Hester and her aunt through the Albany train station and then (by cab) to the Warren Institute, where Hester will undergo eye surgery. At the Rushland hotel, an agitated Diddy watches television news—much about the war and the weather, nothing about the dead workman. Space contracts and expands as a sleepless Diddy ponders his sin and the prospect of confession. Reads the first edition of the morning paper. Nothing. More television: a sermonette the once Catholic Diddy can’t stop watching, then the Late Show—railroads vs. ranchers. A bewildered Diddy goes out for coffee and thinks of Hester; back in his room, Diddy may (or may not) dream about the Raggedy Andy doll he had—or his cousin Ann had—as a child, “Dearer to Diddy than his parents,” which (yet) Diddy abused and blinded. Though destroyed in a “Halloween bonfire when Diddy was eleven,” in his dream the doll is back; Diddy relives its sacrifice and the flood of biblical grief attributed to Ann by Diddy and his callous boyhood cohorts. Confused, as between memory and dream, between himself and a presiding witch, Diddy decides to “Forgive. Forget.” Then that the murder of Andy was “his first suicide attempt.” The “Late Final” newspaper contains a brief story about the death of Angelo Incardona, who “was apparently struck by the Privateer.” Diddy ponders arrest and confession and his own desire to live. He orders flowers for Hester. Invited to breakfast by a colleague, Jim Allen, a hungry “Diddy took it to be the mandate of life.”

(7) Shop talk over breakfast, rumors of foreign competition. A hearse-like limo transports Diddy and colleagues—through residential streets like the one where Diddy the doctor’s son grew up, then through a “less prosperous belt” of frame houses—to the main door of the plant, where Diddy sees “a rather

handsome example of Victorian factory architecture” topped by a blue and gold dome that had once marked the company chapel and subsequently became the company emblem. Admiring the pious “energy of self-approval commemorated in the sturdy dome,” Diddy “wishes the elevator could go straight up, into the dome,” where he imagines he’ll find a workman. Diddy thinks of Hester to “keep his mind reined in.”

(8) “The first day’s session at the plant.” Conference room and conferees. The Japanese photomicrographic outfit on display. Expected to side with the old guard, today Diddy feels “like doing the unexpected.” After lunch, a “vitrified” Diddy tunes out “most of the ensuing discussion.” Somewhere “inside himself,” Diddy anticipates visiting Hester.

(9) At the hospital, the aunt inquires “whether Diddy is married.” He is “Stupefied” by her “indiscriminate chatter” and the implication that Hester is his for the asking. Alone with Hester, Diddy ponders her lookless look and how “the faces of the blind are not in dialogue with other faces as faces”; he decides it’s her mouth he must look to for complicity, however stiff their conversation. Diddy “inspects” Hester’s (featureless) room, “as if it might serve as a mnemonic device,” ponders the risks of revelation, the newspaper clipping in his wallet. Hester, unbidden, agrees there is danger and asks him to leave. “Diddy feels magnetized, then dizzy,” then peacefully aware of “what it’s like to be blind,” of paying constant attention to a liberatingly unstable world. He leaves.

(10) Uncertain of his “resolve to stay away from the police,” the recently weak-eating Diddy dines with Jim Allen, though he soon regrets it. Back in his room, Diddy dreams of a stamp dealer and a priest and a seashell, which Diddy takes “moral possession” of by lecturing: “the great era of conchology is definitely over,” leaving the field to amateurs unable to tell a real shell from a work of art, a process of decline that “the poor shells themselves” could “do nothing to halt.” Diddy thinks of big men who like small things. Challenged as to his sources, Diddy mentions a newspaper clipping he keeps in his wallet and “decides that it’s time to call attention to some of the shell’s virtues,” which all of a sudden have vanished. Diddy thinks of Andy and jumps off the train, into a dark tunnel, where he hunts for the shell like a fairy-tale prince. He can’t find the shell “because he’s already inside it.”

(11) Tuesday morning. Diddy ponders going to Incardona’s funeral, as if seeing his widow and son would lay Diddy’s doubt to rest. Decides *not* to visit Hester, but finds “No answer” to the question of attending the funeral.

(12) Jolted by a chilly comment from Reager, the company’s managing director (we eventually learn), Diddy keeps “his mind on his work” and lets the funeral “fall out of his head.” Claiming to write for a union magazine, Diddy (as “Mr. Douglas”) calls the funeral home, after work, to inquire about Incardona. The discovery that Incardona was cremated throws the workman “back again into the realm of phantoms.” Diddy decides to investigate. Recounts Incardona’s autopsy, which he “had imagined” so “clearly”: “A long steel table,” “A Negro

in white jacket and pants,” a cross-shaped incision. Problems of evidence, reason, nomenclature. “Murder stinks.”

(13) A death-obsessed Diddy visits Hester, briefly. Posing as a railroad employee, Diddy calls on Myra Incardona; bad teeth, bell bottoms, an “overfurnished parlor” and the stench of “cigarettes, fish, and cooking oil,” something “familiar.” Tommy vs. his father. “Joe” vs. “Angelo.” Why cremation? “Diddy the Disconcerted” becomes increasingly aware of Myra’s “pungent flesh.” Myra infers the question of suicide from Diddy’s inquiry and takes offense. Myra praises Diddy’s “nifty tie” and asks his first name; he says “Paul.” Diddy admits he’s not a railroad employee; claims to be an insurance investigator. Diddy is fatigued; Myra offers her bedroom; Diddy recovers his strength. “Did your husband drink?” “You people are gonna pay and pay plenty,” says Myra, leading Diddy to the door. A clear world, an opaque one; Diddy no longer doubts Incardona existed. He walks to a bar, to a bar girl named Doris; Diddy doesn’t look like a cop. After sex, Diddy dreams of marriage to Myra, a lifetime of revulsions, Myra as Mary, Diddy’s garrulous childhood nurse; Paul’s escape, Diddy’s entrapment. Diddy leaves dreaming and Doris.

(14) Thursday. Diddy barely gets to the company limo on time, ponders his “Sad destructive choice,” prompted by his wife, of a job over medical school. Love and work; Diddy and Incardona. Diddy passes Jim a note asking about autopsies. A vote is taken to have “One last go at improving Scope 21.” At lunch, a distracted Diddy is volunteered for a TV show. Jim jokingly wonders if Diddy plans to bump off Reager and offers to help. Diddy almost tells Jim about Incardona.

(15) Diddy skips a plant tour and arrives unannounced, though not unexpected, at Hester’s hospital room, tries to counter her sad premonition about the corneal transplant while pondering the mysteries of sight and imagination. Hester disavows Diddy’s estimation of her sightless insight while demonstrating, at least to Diddy, its truth, in words that strike Diddy “an immense blow.” Sexually rebuffed, Diddy tries to leave; sexually responded to, Diddy does.

(16) Diddy ponders the mystery of binocular vision, in which one eye (the healthy one, which “stands for his tie with Hester”) can by sympathy suffer the same trauma as the other (the diseased eye “That stands for Incardona’s death”). Wanting Hester to know he loves her, Diddy laboriously writes out a telegram while comparing himself to an elderly black woman.

(17) Diddy walks, looks, tries to feel; browses sex shops, tries on a mask, plays arcade games. Arrives at the TV station; observes a taping of *Long Day’s Journey into Night* and a pre-recording of a nightly news segment. Diddy ponders his roles, as brother to Paul, as small-time murderer by contrast with the licensed practitioners of patriotic “overkill.” Others arrive. Reager and the producer joust to control the rehearsal while awaiting the arrival of Reager’s photographically inclined daughter. “Diddy the Depressed” ponders the logic of antipathy and finds himself a reluctant party to the dispute.

(18) Begging off Reager's offers of drinks or a lift, and giving Evie Reager the toy panda he'd won, Diddy returns to his hotel and to dreaming. Hester's shades are square, made of celluloid, "a tiny hole in the center of each lens." Diddy ponders the implications: of detached retinas, of "great and unnecessary risks," of lavatory sex, of Hester's complicity with Incardona. Diddy stands in the gallery of an operating theater with a Bolex (like Evie's) while the surgeon's laser burns Hester. Uncertain of her bandage-swathed (gender) identity, Diddy is pushed aside when Hester (now) rips off her bandages; is reduced to peeking through a microscope-like keyhole as an isolated doctor wields a scalpel and a company colleague relays a diagnosis. Diddy seeks televisual access to the operation, though in seeking a studio he winds up in his hotel room, where he imagines Incardona as "a suitable corpse" from which to harvest corneas for Hester. A rushing Diddy finds himself in Manhattan, then (youthfully) sprints to catch the Privateer.

(19) A dream-wracked Diddy writes a report rather than sleep; is silent at the morning meeting lest new ideas require a postscript. To quiet her aunt, Diddy offers to help with Hester's hospital bills, despite the failed operation, because he wants to marry her. Leaving the hospital, Diddy walks and ponders his motives, Hester's options, the "number and qualities and uses" of eyes. Hunger slaked, Diddy returns to the hospital; Hester agrees to live with Diddy, but upbraids Diddy for his jealousy of her aunt. At the company banquet, Diddy eats silently, thinking "that he's eating for Hester."

(20) Saturday. Diddy bids colleagues farewell and moves hotels. Cooks up a story to justify sick leave. Hester and Diddy are (differently) anxious. She worries about his job; Diddy avers he "can always manage," even if New York doesn't agree with her. Though he asks Hester to urge her aunt to go home, he is "overcome with remorse" for his possessiveness and begs Mrs. Nayburn's forgiveness.

(21) Diddy takes Jessie Nayburn to dinner. "Families are a wonderful thing" Jessie sighs, after Diddy describes his renegade Aunt Anne. Diddy shifts the topic to Hester's parents, her mother: in a mental hospital for blinding Hester with lye, "the dreadful Gothic scenario." Mrs. Nayburn's story: sister-in-law to Hester's renegade father, jealous of Hester's mother, herself childless, Hester's guardian since the mishap. Diddy wonders about Hester's two years in a special school in Chicago, her sexual coming of age and current erotic life. In his hotel room, Diddy thinks of Hester, tries to avoid projecting his own survivor's pathology onto her; imagines "a whole row" of Hester dolls; violence in the dollhouse leads Diddy to "Sweep those dolls off the dream shelf in favor of a "life-size mannequin" in the window. Sees himself as loving Hester for her sanctity and sanity, though he has "no clue as to how Hester feels." Perhaps she is too intelligent to suffer, where Diddy had once been too dull; understands his latter-day enlightenment, by analogy with theater, as a form of (emotional) blindness. Hester may teach him.

(22) Monday. Hester recovers in new quarters, with room-mates; conversation is more constrained if more crucial. Diddy substitutes Jane Austen for the words he cannot utter, himself as reader for Hester's aunt. Inspired by Austen, Diddy, Jessie, and Hester "unite in an unspoken alliance expressly designed to denigrate nobody" and to apportion their time. Though he might be spotted by company colleagues, Diddy finds comfort in routine. He accepts Jessie, his own lack of activity, his ability to sleep, the weight he's gaining. Jessie announces her departure; Diddy is disconcerted. Over dinner, Jessie makes him promise to marry Hester. On the train to help Jessie with her bags, Diddy finds the Incardona nightmare "recharged"; cracks himself in the head with a suitcase. Pulled by the past, Diddy hopes Hester is "a counterpull from the present." Hopes he can convert past into future by treating "time as space," "exchange" one space for another. Diddy tries to think of Hester "apart from himself." Hopes she won't see him as he imagines she sees her mother, hopes he can learn to "Act wisely," that Hester will "lead him out" of the "labyrinth of his own consciousness." Finding Hester in the hospital lounge, "Diddy's heart breaks open." She is his "black sun."

(23) Diddy arrives early Wednesday morning to take Hester from the hospital. He ponders the erotics of looking, his envy of blindness. Hester warns Diddy that he can't be like her, "shouldn't want to" be. Half-listening, Diddy ponders the rhetoric of love, the selfishness of desire, the benefits to himself "of his humblest daily services" to Hester, the way narrating the world to her will give him "a chance to see the whole world with fresh eyes," versus the "distanced," "abstract" way of looking he needs to "unlearn." "If it's not too late."

(24) New York City, early December, an unemployed Diddy takes Hester "sightseeing," though he "rein[s] in his explorations" for Hester's sake. Diddy introduces Hester to the "miniature mausoleum" of his apartment and possessions; her indifference inspires him to "disburden" himself of otherwise functional objects. Late December: Diddy buys two Christmas trees. Smells the trees; smells Hester. She cooks and cleans. Different tastes in music. Lights remain off after dark.

(25) A fearful Diddy ponders answering the doorbell; no help from Hester. A thread snaps. A drunken Paul wants to sleep it off; Diddy promises to explain but refuses Paul's request and offer of money. Back in the flat, Diddy expresses his distrust of Paul, Hester her distrust of him. "Their first full-blooded quarrel, the honeymoon's end." As if an elegant Hester almost liked being sightless, Diddy questions her about her feelings for her mother, her blindness. She hates both, Diddy sometimes, too, for his "powerful desire to destroy" himself. Uncertain of her desires, Hester is sure of their direction—"to destroy someone else," not herself. Though Hester is no saint, Diddy is a tempter. "Suddenly, for a brief flash of light, Diddy the Deceived saw the truth." Then seeks an alternative explanation. If he is Lazarus, perhaps she is Medusa. Diddy insists that Hester meet Paul; Hester insists on sex.

(26) With Xan-the-dog packed off, Diddy and Hester rarely leave the apartment, though thinking about Xan sparks Diddy's recall of his unfinished novel, *The Story of the Wolf-Boy*, which he'd like to read to Hester, though it is missing, along with Paul's Chopin Prize medal, from "that heavy cardboard box." A fragment version of the story becomes his standard dream. Prologue: Though seeming human, the Wolf-Boy weeps "Because he's an animal, and because he aspires to be something better." Part I: Diddy listens as Wolf-Boy "recounts the history of his life" as "Hiawatha Shaw," once the child of a Cherokee acrobat and a Hungarian lion tamer, then the adopted son of Lyndon the sword swallower, who tells Hiawatha he is really "the offspring of two giant apes." Wolf-Boy flees Lyndon for Arizona, where, at age sixteen, he undergoes metamorphosis, becoming hairy over most of his body; where, at age twenty, outside Tucson, he lives in a cliff-side cave. Wolf-Boy tells Diddy of the time "a tall, skinny girl about twelve or thirteen years old with long black hair" almost climbed into his lair, tempting a desperate Wolf-Boy to become "a real animal," Wolf-Man. Is saved when the girl's dog (Lassie) directs her parents' attentions to the cliff; they call the girl down before she sees him. Sharing a pipe, Wolf-Boy tells Diddy how "unbearably intimate" the experience with the girl had been. Part II: Diddy moves to the center of the story, which exists chiefly as "fragments of acts" (combing the Wolf-Boy's coat, finding a medal like Paul's round his neck, Wolf-Boy's losing language and size, Diddy's carrying Wolf-Boy deeper into the cave) and Diddy's "own tormented thoughts" (about reversion and contagion, misunderstanding and affection, Incardona and restitution, the desire to awake and the temptation to dream on, Diddy's inability to recount the dream, to trust Hester, Diddy the Damaged and Diddy the Good, noble and ignoble blindness). Hester's tears notwithstanding, Diddy "resumes" his not "fully present" life.

(27) Though Diddy has "exclusive possession (now) of his love," his strength "is ebbing away," and with it his "power to speak," as if out of sympathy for Hester's sightlessness. Space shrinks; disorder increases; daylight decreases. "The vertigo of sex. The miniature frontal lobotomy that follows orgasm." Ponders speaking to Hester of Incardona, whom everyone but Hester mirrors, for whom they speak, "howling mutely for Diddy's blood." Sensing death, missing Hester, a bedridden Diddy calls out "Look at me." Anger that Hester has missed her cue, dropped her line ("Afraid of what?"). Different truths, something undone. "Well, then, get up and do it."

(28) Diddy and Hester in the railway tunnel, fairy-tale children, strength and guile. An indecipherable noise, Hester's fear. The same tunnel or a different one? Incardona or his lookalike brother? "Just hold on to me" says Diddy to Hester, the laughing workman too, miming Diddy's line and his lust. Diddy, St. George against the "beasts," picks up a crowbar; amidst medical-emergency hubbub, Diddy "brings the crowbar down on the man's head." "He's really dead (now)." Frustrated by Hester's blindness, Diddy shouts "I want to be seen!" Then "something in Diddy yields." Diddy and Hester make love; "Diddy feels

forgiven.” Rising “like a sea creature out of its shell,” Diddy props a sleeping Hester against the wall and goes exploring, naked, beyond the barrier, into a morguelike gallery littered with (phallic) objects and (death-themed) texts, profuse with ill-kept coffins. Though fearing bruises, Diddy examines the corpses; mostly white Americans, some even centuries old, the most recent: Martha Elizabeth Templeton, 1922–1933. Diddy explores the crypt and its time-dirty anterooms: walls of coffins, “Skulls like shells.” A “second grand crypt,” the dead roped in ranks to the wall, stacked on the floor, their faces more decayed than those in the first chamber; specialized rooms: young children, firemen, priests (some stuffed with high church straw), aged Civil War vets, male athletes, farmers and farmhands. Diddy wonders who will cart Incardona’s body back to the crypt. Though the charnel house fills, Diddy’s mood is “somehow light”; things look (explicably) familiar though new, theatrical, as if Diddy were a critic, or subject to judgment. A nightmare, or its resolution? The “puzzle of the two nightmares,” of “being completely inside one’s own head.” Two eyes, outward, inward. The “happiness of being in his body,” “A rancid smell.” Dreaming of Hester, “Death and the maiden.” A Negro in white. “Diddy has perceived the inventory of the world.”

- A3a*                    *Death Kit*. London: Seeker & Warburg, 1968. 311 pp.
- A3b*                    *Death Kit*. New York: Signet, NAL, 1968. 315 pp.
- \**A3c*                    *Dødens redskab*. Trans. (Dan.) Birte Svensson [Austin Grandjean?]. Copenhagen: Gyldendal, 1968. 308 pp.
- A3d*                    *Estuche de muerte*. Trans. (Span.) Roberto Ruiz. Mexico, D.F.: Editorial Joaquín Mortiz, 1969. 373 pp.
- \**A3e*                    *Sista hjälpen*. Trans. (Swed.) Olov Jonason. Stockholm: Norstedt, 1969. 315pp.
- \**A3f*                    *Death Kit*. Harmondsworth, UK: Penguin, 1970. 314 pp.
- A3g*                    *Derniers recours*. Trans. (Fr.) Anne Minkowski. Paris: Seuil, 1970. 333pp.
- A3h*                    *Morte em questão*. Trans. (Port.) Alvaro Cabral and Sérgio Pachá. Rio de Janeiro: Editôra Expressão e Cultura, 1970. 358pp.
- \**A3i*                    *Shi no soñgu*. Trans. (Jap.) Kazue Saito. Tokyo: Hayakawa Shobō & Co., 1970. 374pp.
- A3j*                    *Death Kit*. New York: Plume, NAL; Scarborough, Ont: New American Library of Canada; London: New English Library, 1971. 311pp.
- \**A3k*                    *Il kit della morte*. Trans. (Ital.) Bruno Fonzi. Turin: Einaudi, 1973. 304pp.
- A3l*                    *Death Kit*. New York: Delta, Dell, 1978. 311 pp.

- \*A3m            *Sista hjälpen*. Trans. (Swed.) Olov Jonason. Uppsala: Bromberg, 1980. 315 pp.
- A3n            *Todesstation: Roman*. Trans. (Ger.) Jörg Trobitius. Munich: Hanser, 1985. 373 pp.  
 Translates A3, with an “Afterword” by Sontag.  
 “Nachwort zur deutschen Ausgabe.” Describes A3 as “the most intimate narrative prose” she has written, however “transposed” from her own experiences. Observes the use of spatial, entropic metaphors; a tunnel, a dream, a shell, a tautology: “the body as ontology.”
- A3o            *Death Kit*. New York: FS&G; Toronto: Collins Publishers, 1986. 311pp.
- \*A3p            *Musta aurinko*. Trans. (Finnish) Marja Haapio. Helsinki: Kirjayhtymä, 1987. 390pp.
- \*A3q            *Todesstation*. Trans. (Ger.) Jörg Trobitius. Munich: Deutscher Taschenbuch Verlag, 1987. 373 pp.
- \*A3r            *Halálkészlet*. Trans. (Hungarian) Zsófia László. Budapest: Európa Köngvkiadó, 1989. 368 pp.
- \*A3s            *Zestaw do śmierci*. Trans. (Pol.) Anna Kołyszko. Warsaw: Państwowy Instytut Wydawniczy, 1989. 367 pp.
- A3t            *Death Kit*. New York: Anchor, Doubleday, 1991. 311 pp.

A4 *Trip to Hanoi*. New York: FS&G; Toronto: Doubleday Canada, 1968. 91pp.  
 See A5, B37.

Comprises four unnumbered segments: (1) an introduction discussing the difficulties that both hindered and encouraged Sontag’s writing about her trip, (2) dated journal entries, (3) an analysis of the changes that overtook her earlier hesitations and caveats about North Vietnam, and (4) a brief coda sketching out the prospects for revolution “far from Vietnam.”

(1) Outlines factors contributing to her initial “confusion” about her trip: (1) inability to incorporate her “radical political convictions” into her earlier writings, (2) cultural dislocation, (3) distractions provided by traveling companions (Andrew Kopkind, Robert Greenblatt), and (4) the Vietnam already in her head, by contrast with which the real North Vietnam seemed either ridiculously reduced (like a film star in the flesh) or a hallucination (as if Sontag herself were on screen).

(2) *May 5*. Cultural differences, of hospitality and language, are the hardest things “to estimate, to overcome.” Vietnamese guides treat Sontag and her companions like children. That everyone talks “in the same style,” says the same thing, makes it hard to see people as individuals. *May 6*. Sontag experiences the visit theatrically, as extra, spectator, child—yet she longs for “the three-dimensional, textured, ‘adult’ world.” Though “already comfortable with some

of the key words” (“The Front,” “liberated zones”), and glad for the chance to renew “connection with [her] historical memory,” Sontag experiences such terms “as elements of an *official* language,” thus revealing a gap between ethical simplicity and aesthetic complexity. *May 7*. Sontag misses “the world of psychology,” by contrast with the “monothematic” historical world of the Vietnamese, a world of invasion and resistance, “one long martyrdom.” By contrast with the Western taste for cultural variety, the Vietnamese ascribe value to repetition; it is “a positive moral style.” *May 8*. Visiting “a ‘little’ culture,” Sontag fears having her “seriousness ironed out,” fears a lack of “contradictions and paradoxes.” *May 9*. By contrast with the Cuban revolution, the Vietnamese revolution seems “alien,” beyond learning from. Where Cuban manners are “populist,” Vietnamese manners are “formal, measured,” “hierarchical.” Where the Cuban revolution released “energies of all kinds, including erotic ones,” Vietnamese culture is “almost sexless.” Though fearing her hosts “are simply too generous, too credulous,” Sontag is “drawn to that kindly credulity,” evidenced in part by their “just plain fascination with the United States.” This “unexpectedly complex, yet ingenuous relation to the United States overlays every situation between individual Vietnamese” and their American guests, and Sontag doesn’t “have the insight or the moral authority to strip” matters “down” to the “‘real’ situation.”

(3) Because she understood Vietnam via its “election as the target” of the self-righteous “style of American will,” she didn’t understand “the nature of Vietnamese will—its style, its range, its nuances.” The first sign of a change was an increased comfort with the language, having discovered “the standard words and phrases to be richer” than she had at first imagined. “American friends” and “respect” are defined by the “completeness” of Norman Morrison’s self-immolation; “civility” and “sincerity” and “the dignity of the individual”—by contrast with “psychological criteria” of irony-addicted Western cultures—are defined in Vietnam externally, as “an appropriate relation between the speaker’s words and behavior and his social identity.” Where “guilt-cultures” like our own are “prone to intellectual doubt and moral convolutedness,” “shame-cultures” like Vietnam’s involve a “much less ambivalently felt” relation to moral demands. Thus “the influence of Communist moral demands” probably derives “its authority from the indigenous [Confucian] respect for a highly moralized social and personal order.” By contrast to “The Jews’ manner of experiencing their suffering,” an ironically “complex kind of pessimism,” the Vietnamese style of martyrdom is strikingly positive in their “espousal of optimism as a form of understanding.” Indeed, the war has “democratized” the country by decentralizing (deurbanizing) power and populations. The ingenuity with which the Vietnamese employ resources (even downed and captured American aircraft) is also evident in the “economical, laconic wisdom” of their leaders. Though not claiming that “North Vietnam is a model of a just state,” in light of “the more notorious crimes” of the current government, Sontag must acknowledge some truth to the Vietnamese claim “that democracy has deep roots in their culture.”

Despite the Western equation of “organization” and “depersonalization,” “when love enters into the substance of social relations, the connection of people to a single party need not be dehumanizing.” “The indistinct separation between public and private among the Vietnamese” allows them to avoid the ironic trap of talk and allows for a passionate form of patriotism that “need not be identical with chauvinism.” Convinced that “no serious radical movement has any future in America unless it can revalidate the tarnished idea of patriotism,” Sontag vows to try.

(4) Takes her “passive experience of historical education” as being finally an “active confrontation” with the “limits” of her own thinking as “an unaffiliated radical American, an American writer.” Because “the virtues of the Vietnamese” are “not directly emulatable,” the “revolution that remains to be made in this country must be made in American terms.” Because an “event that makes new feelings conscious is always the most important experience a person can have,” and because of “the wide prevalence of unfocused unhappiness in modern Western culture,” there is reason for hope. Sontag takes her own experience, like that of French students in the May 1968 uprising, as evidence that “the ‘revolution’ has just started.”

- \*A4a            *Viagem a Hanoi*. Trans. (Port.) Alvaro Cabral. Rio de Janeiro: Editôra Expressão e Cultura, 1968. 161 pp.
- \*A4b            *Hanoi de kangaeta koto*. Trans. (Jap.) Chūji Kunitaka. Tokyo: Shōbunsha, 1969. 152pp.
- \*A4c            *Matka Hanoihin*. Trans. (Fin.) Ritva Turunen. Hämeenlinna: A.A.Karisto, 1969. 112 pp.
- \*A4d            *Reise nach Hanoi*. Trans. (Ger.) Anne Uhde. Reinbek bei Hamburg: Rowohlt, 1969. 86 pp.
- \*A4e            *Reis naar Hanoi*. Trans. (Dutch) Guido Prinsen. Antwerp and Utrecht: Bruna, 1969. 88 pp.
- \*A4f            *Rejse til Hanoi*. Trans. (Dan.) Anne Marie Bjerg. Copenhagen: Spektrums, 1969. 108pp.
- \*A4g            *Resa till Hanoi*. Trans. (Swed.) Erik Sandin. Stockholm: Pan, Norstedt, 1969 [1968?]. 82 pp.
- A4h            *Trip to Hanoi*. London: Panther, 1969. 102 pp.  
Though the title and copyright pages list the original title, both the paper cover and an interior title page of [A4h](#) add the subtitle “Journey to a city at war.”
- \*A4i            *Viaggio a Hanoi*. Trans. (Ital.) Ettore Capriolo. Milan: V. Bompiani, 1969. 124pp.
- A4j            *Viaje a Hanoi*. Trans. (Span.) Louis Guillermo Piazza. Mexico, D.F.: Editorial Joaquín Mortiz, 1969. 91 pp.

\*A4k *Voyage à Hanoi*. Trans. (Fr.) Gérard Durand. Paris: Seuil, 1969. 127pp.

A5 *Styles of Radical Will*. New York: FS&G; Toronto: Doubleday Canada, 1969. 274pp.

The A5 contents page arranges its eight chapters into three parts: (1) “The Aesthetics of Silence” through “Thinking Against Oneself”; (2) “Theatre and Film” through “Godard”; (3) “What’s Happening in America” and “Trip to Hanoi.”

“The Aesthetics of Silence” (B28). Comprises twenty-one numbered segments.

(1–3) Describes “art” as one of our era’s “most active metaphors for the spiritual project,” which seeks to resolve or transcend “the painful contradictions inherent in the human situation.” Once various arts become (modern) “art,” art becomes mythical, to be demystified; hence the myth of absolute expressiveness or self-consciousness, hence its tragic sequel, art as “antidote” to consciousness. Rather than escape the material for the spiritual via art, the tragic artist discovers that art is itself “material,” entrapping. Yet even the renunciation of art and its (voyeuristic) audience can have the paradoxical effect of confirming its status—because “silence,” in expressing a “reluctance to communicate,” is “a highly social gesture.” Indeed, the passage of time, in which newer works make earlier transgressions seem “ingratiating,” insures that “the isolation of the work from its audience never lasts.”

(4–8) Elaborates the “rhetoric” of silence. Silence can take the form of suicide, of renunciation, of madness, of censorship; but it can’t be “the” (singular) property of an artwork because experience is inescapably *of* something; silence is experienced “dialectically.” Various myths of silence are “pathetic” in their limitations, moving either toward “utter self-negation” or toward (loudly) heroic inconsistency. Breton’s concept of the “full margin” (with its blank center) is an example of the “devious” pursuit of silence that aims “either [to] promote a more immediate, sensuous experience of art or confront the artwork in a more conscious, conceptual way.” As a technique of focusing attention, contemporary art seeks totality by selectivity, though its wish is to “attain the unfettered, unselective, total consciousness of ‘God.’” In its abstractness and contingency, language is both trope of and medium for the “unhappy character” of contemporary art: intersubjective, communal, yet “weighed down by historical accumulation.”

(9–12) Ponders visual tropes related to “silence”: staring, opaqueness, “a perceptual and cultural clean slate,” “clear” thought and “clear” speech, etc. Common to all is some form of annihilation or liberation, of the viewing subject, of history, of thought. But as “prophecy,” silence transvalues not only speech but itself, yielding “a speech beyond silence.”

(13–7) Considers various motives and uses for speech acts. Silence can lead to further thought; it can “undermine” speech “not organically informed by the sensuous presence and concrete particularity of the speaker.” Despite the nightmare aspect of Wittgenstein’s ambition to say “everything” sayable, modern

culture wants to, as if to further the “devaluation” (or recovery or redemption) of language initiated in mysticism, breaking the grip of “psychological” continuity by “going to the *end* of each emotion or thought.” By contrast, Rilke offers the “spiritual exercise of confining language to naming”; by contrast with “benign nominalism,” the “aesthetics of the inventory” propose a more “brutal nominalism,” as if to confirm (by parody) the capitalist alienation of people and/from things. Novalis’s claim that language is self-referential helps explain the paradox of an age that promotes both silence and babble, as if it were “possible to out-talk language.” The kinship of neurosis and art is evident in the aesthetic practice of filling the void with emptiness, “with objects of slight emotional weight or with large areas of barely modulated color.” When writing (vs. speaking) is critiqued, it is often linear narrative that is targeted; yet it is the nonlinear qualities of speech that typify the narratives of Joyce, Stein, etc., thus complicating the writing/speaking distinction.

(18–20) Ponders the relations between “meaning” and “use.” The conversion of meaning to use both invites and repels significance, yielding interpretative anxiety—among readers committed to an aesthetics of reference or “expression” or at the “essential contingency” of the artwork itself. The “expression” theory takes silence as a matter of the “ineffable” or “beautiful,” which it is poetry’s duty to adduce. Such a view of the ineffable is “naïvely unhistorical”; where the category of the ineffable once had its home in religion or philosophy, the contemporary myth of the “absoluteness” of art necessarily gives modern art “a certain aura of the unspeakable” that must be acknowledged. Though “loud” calls for silence “must endure the indignity” of outlasting their own apocalyptic prophecies, the “soft” or “classical” way of talking about silence shares in its “ironic openmindedness” the “same disdain for the ‘meanings’ established by bourgeoisrationalist culture.”

(21) Whether “Art conceived as a spiritual project” can bear up under this burden depends “on the viability of irony” as a “counterweight” to the gravity of the spiritual ordeal. And even if Nietzsche is wrong in taking irony (contra Socrates) as signifying cultural decadence, “there still remains a question as to how far the resources of irony can be stretched.”

“The Pornographic Imagination” (B30). Comprises six numbered segments.

(1) Distinguishes three “pornographies”—social-historical, psychological, aesthetic—for the purpose of discussing those few pornographic novels that, by virtue of “artistic excellence,” constitute a literary genre. Most discourse on pornography reduces it to “pathological symptom and problematic social commodity,” thus limiting disagreement to the question of its social or psychological consequences.

(2) Four arguments distinguishing literature from pornography stifle debate: (a) that pornography has a single “intention,” (b) that pornographic works in their single-mindedness “lack the beginning-middle-and-end form characteristic of literature,” (c) that “pornographic writing can’t evidence any care for its means of expression,” and (d) that literature’s subject matter is the “complex

feelings” of “human beings” versus pornography’s “disdain” for “fully formed persons.” Takes *The Story of O* as counterfactual on all four accounts. Takes realism (vs. fantasy, vs. pastoral) as only one means for exploring “consciousness” as a world medium. Other aims of literature include “Exploring ideas,” “imaging” the inanimate, and depicting “extreme states of human feeling and consciousness.” A critical approach less committed than realism to a correspondence model of truth would describe the artist’s task as “making forays into and taking up positions on the frontiers of consciousness.” As contemporary critics are not likely to debar all “fantastic” literary forms, their silence on pornographic literature evinces “a special standard” reserved for “sexual themes.” Even those for whom “the sexually obsessed consciousness” can be a fit literary subject insist upon the proper “distance” from the material. But it is less the distance than the deranging “originality” and “power” of the work that qualifies pornography as literature. Its “singleness” of erotic intention is thus “as much a means” as an end.

(3) Because “only images and representations” are pornographic, pornographic books are self-conscious, artificial, invoking other books as much as sexuality. *The Story of O* refers to de Sade and “the conventions of the ‘libertine’ potboilers written in nineteenth-century France.” Yet where the Sadean “dramaturgy” of ideas (wherein people are “interchangeable” with things and one another) allows “an endless” and “ultimately affectless activity,” *O* is presented as willful and knowledgeable, as “profoundly active in her own passivity,” as possessing “a consciousness, from which vantage point her story is told,” a story having “a definite movement; a logic of events.” Like “humours” comedy, pornography sees character “only from the outside,” allowing for disparity between outrageous events and deadpan reactions, a disparity that makes room for the reader’s own (erotic) response. By contrast with Sade’s uncomprehending Justine, *O* “learns, she suffers, she changes,” becoming “more what she is” by “emptying” herself out. “The power of the book” derives from this “spiritual paradox” that questions “the status of human personality itself.” By contrast with the “liberal” view of “human sexual appetite” as a “natural pleasant function,” the French tradition suggests that human sexuality is “a highly questionable phenomenon” that belongs “among the extreme rather than the ordinary experiences of humanity.” Pornographic literature thus enacts the epistemological difference “between one’s existence as a full human being and one’s existence as a sexual being.”

(4) Compares Sade and Bataille. Despite the former’s “mechanistic inventiveness,” the latter’s “sparse” narratives are “more potent and outrageous” because Bataille more emphatically exposes the “subterranean connection” between death and “extreme erotic experience.” Though pornography’s “abrupt” endings are not the fault some (Adorno) take them to be, Bataille systematizes pornographic closure by showing how the intensifications of fantasy in *Histoire de l’Oeil* “use up” a limited number of erotic objects, all of which are “versions

of the same thing.” Bataille indicates “the aesthetic possibilities of pornography” exactly by revealing “the *limits* of pornographic thinking.”

(5) The “pornographic imagination” proposes “a total universe” in which everything is potentially (sexually) related to everything. The temptation to take *The Story of O* as a religious parable evinces the modern inability to talk “at the most serious, ardent, and enthusiastic level” without recourse to the devaluing equation of religion with totality that is Western culture’s (post-religious) legacy. Pornography evinces capitalism’s failure “to satisfy the appetite for exalted self-transcending modes of concentration and seriousness.”

(6) As art, pornography is not only a shareable “poetry of transgression” but “is also knowledge.” Those who object to the “depressing” availability of pornographic literature may really be reacting to the “sense in which *all* knowledge is dangerous” because “not everyone is in the same condition as knowers or potential knowers.” Trying to “live” with the question of “the quality or fineness of the human subject” itself may lead to a “censorship much more radical than the indignant foes of pornography ever envisage.”

“Thinking Against Oneself”: Reflections on Cioran” (D19). Comprises eighteen unnumbered segments.

(1–3) Surveys the history of philosophical historicizing. Where philosophy since the Greeks had depended on atemporal “abstraction” (vs. narrative myth) as its “rhetorical mode,” “in which ‘nature’ is the dominant theme and change is recessive,” events climaxed by the French Revolution saw history usurp nature “as the decisive framework for human experience.” After Hegel failed to forestall the slide into time by defining philosophy as “the *history* of philosophy,” “the traditional ahistorical categories of philosophy became hollowed out.” One response to this situation was the rise of “anti-philosophical” ideologies; another was “a new kind of philosophizing: personal (even autobiographical), aphoristic, lyrical, anti-systematic,” of which Cioran “is the most distinguished” contemporary exemplar.

(4–7) Describes Cioran as witnessing “to the impasse of the speculative mind, which moves outward only to be checked and broken off by the complexity of its own stance.” The Cartesian equation of existence and thought is retained, but thought becomes “*difficult* thinking”; existence is therefore a “temptation,” not a brute fact. In seeing philosophy as “tortured thinking,” Cioran follows Nietzsche, though in his belatedness Cioran “must tighten the screws, make the argument denser” thus creating “a closed universe—of the difficult—that is the subject of his lyricism.”

(8–11) Ponders the philosophical “double standard” by which what is “healthy” for the culture (“the sacrifice of the intellect”) opposes “the free use of the mind.” Rather than see thought as undermining action, Cioran pictures action as undermining consciousness, which is “the only genuine mode of human freedom,” however much thought runs the risk of becoming incurably enervated or “overcivilized.” To be “genuinely alive” is to assume “a maximum of

incompatibilities,” to make “the athletic leap of consciousness into its own complexity.”

(12–4) Though (mystically, romantically) opposed to intellect, to “Liberal humanism,” to revolution, in that sense a reactionary, Cioran nevertheless exalts “the life of the mind,” of “artifice”—though his “surrender to all rebellions,” unlike that of the great mystics, is resolutely antitheological.

(15–7) Measures literature and philosophy against Cioran’s (aristocratic) standard of “*spiritual good taste*.” Literature’s “confusions” and “emotional rewards” risk inauthenticity. Nietzschean philosophy rejects history, *because* it is true, a “truth that has to be overthrown to allow a more inclusive orientation for human consciousness.” Though indebted to Nietzsche, Cioran lacks “anything comparable to Nietzsche’s heroic effort to surmount nihilism,” largely because he does not follow Nietzsche in critiquing “the essential fraud and bad faith” of “Platonic intellectual transcendence.”

(18) Compares Cioran to John Cage, who shares Cioran’s aphoristic style, his “commitment to a radical transvaluation of values,” yet who “envisages a world in which most of Cioran’s problems and tasks simply don’t exist.” Cage’s easy acceptance of the “empty space of time” points to how thoroughly, how willfully, Cioran “is still confined within the premises of the historicizing [European] consciousness.”

“Theatre and Film” (B25). Comprises nineteen unnumbered segments.

(1–4) Asks if there is, per Panofsky, an “unbridgeable gap” between theater and film. Addresses ontological arguments for distinguishing the two by observing that “cinema is a medium as well as an art.” As medium, film can document theater, but also nonstaged events, as well as events staged explicitly (à la Méliès) for the camera. The claim that “cinema is committed to reality” implicitly urges a “political-moral position,” regarding cinema as (realistically) reflecting the class origins of its audience while theater “smacks of aristocratic taste and the class society.” But “theatricality” and “abstraction” (as in Renoir and Dreyer) are equally as “cinematic.”

(5–8) Investigates *formal* aspects of film and theater. Panofsky’s view that theater space is “static” while cinematic space is “aesthetically” mobile privileges theater as literary text and cinema as moving image—contra Godard, Bresson, Ozu. Construing theater as essentially “artificial”—where photographic realism isn’t—is counterintuitive, “As if art were ever anything else” *but* artifice. If cinema has a “distinctive cinematic unit,” it is not the (static, painterly) image “but the principle of connection between” images that allows cinema, by contrast with theater’s “*continuous* use of space,” to use *discontinuous* space. Against the view that cinematic realism avoids (textual, scriptural) “mediation” is the fact of “cinematic narration,” which “fixes” or determines the cinematic object as fully as writing determines a book, so that film is (in its materiality, as “object art”) a “more rigorous art than theatre.”

(9–13) Addresses the temporal aspects of film and theater. Despite its short history, film is the art “most heavily burdened with memory” because films (as

objects) age. Though polemical invocations of the “possibility” of cinema often imply “the obsolescence of theatre,” there is no singular or particular task “which cinema is better able to perform.” Like painting and photography, theater and film “evidence parallel development rather than a rivalry or supersession.”

(14–8) Considers the “ethical” aspects of film and theater via the modernist equation of aesthetic with political “radicalism.” The “two principal radical positions in the arts today” recommend either the “breaking down of distinctions” between genres and media or “maintaining and clarifying [the] barriers.” Theater and cinema are candidates for being “a total art,” contra the singular facelessness of print. Both cinema and theater seek the “simultaneity” of painting, despite their temporality. Though modernism (e.g., Artaud) valorizes aggression, this form of radicalism can become thoroughly conventional.

(19) Contra oversophistication, “We need a new idea.” “Bergman’s *Persona*” (B31). Comprises six unnumbered segments.

(1) Attacks critics who take *Persona* for granted so as to avoid its protean and agonized “difficulty.” To read its contradictions subjectively, as taking place “in a merely (or wholly) mental universe,” only “transposes” these “discordant internal relations” without resolving them.

(2) To read *Persona* objectively, as “a psychological chamber drama” of exchanged identities, repeats the oversimplification. Unlike Buñuel, Bergman eschews “clear signals for sorting out fantasies from reality.” Though Alma tends to hallucinations, as when she seems to make love to Elizabeth’s (absent) husband, Bergman emphasizes that “hallucinations or visions will appear on the screen with the same rhythms, the same look of objective reality as something ‘real.’” To reduce the film “to story” is to privilege psychology over ontology. But *Persona* takes an “indeterminate” position, “beyond psychology” and “beyond eroticism.”

(3) The meaning of Bergman’s “subject” or “narration” is not determined by a linear plot leading to epistemological closure. *Persona* is replete with “intimations of absence” or of acts “annulled”; relations among parts are less causal than recursively “*thematic*.” And its theme, both formal and psychological, “is that of *doubling*” in which case the doubling of Alma and Elizabeth is as much means as end. By challenging the conviction that meaning lies “behind” the work, Bergman involves us “more directly in other matters, for instance, in the very process of knowing and seeing.”

(4) Bergman meditates on “the nature of representation” most explicitly in the movie’s first and final sequences, which emphasize its status as object, fragile in space and time.

(5) Though Bergman’s “formalist” framing trope—exciting, then extinguishing, an arc-lamp—is “strikingly original,” his emphasis on the means of production is part of “a well-established tendency” in the arts. Bergman’s self-consciousness is “the romantic opposite” of Brecht’s “alienation effect.” Instead of reminding audiences they are watching a film, he asserts, especially in the moment midway through when the film appears to burn, “that the deep,

unflinching knowledge of anything will in the end prove destructive,” if only by using it up. Bergman’s “aesthetic” use of violence confirms “violence of the spirit” as his subject.

(6) Like Henry James, Bergman renders “the dissolution” or “theft” of personality (mythically) as “vampirism.” Unlike James, he withholds causality or moral judgment. Moreover, by abandoning “language” for film, Bergman expresses suspicion as to “the futility and duplicities of language.” In *Persona* silence is more potent than speech; by speaking into the void of Elizabeth’s silence, Alma “falls into it—depleting herself.” In *Persona*, Bergman shows “mask and person, speech and silence,” forever divided, if forever intertwined.

“Godard” (B34). Comprises five unnumbered segments.

(1) Takes Godard as “indisputably the most influential director of his generation” because his films, not yet “classics,” are “unpredictable,” because each “derives its final value from its place in a larger enterprise,” and because of his appetitive style as a “‘destroyer’ of cinema” via “hybridization,” his “mixtures of tonalities, themes, and narrative methods.” Godard’s cinematic appropriation of literature (and philosophy) is exemplary; literature, “condemned [like cinema] to an analysis of the world,” must become material, “be dismantled or broken into wayward units.” What Godard envies in literature is “explicit ideation”; his chief literary model is the prose essay (which he likens, tellingly, to the novel).

(2) The “standard criticism” of Godard derives from cinema’s status as “the last bastion of the values of the nineteenth-century novel and theater,” though this criticism follows more from the “partly erased or effaced” presence of plot, motive, and so on in his films than from their absence. Another source of critical discontent is Godard’s preference for “mediocre, even sub-literary material,” especially “popular American narrative,” as providing a sensuously energized “pretext” for his subsequent antinarrative “abstracting,” often accomplished by setting “the impulsive, dissociated tone of melodrama” against the sociological or documentary “fact.” Thus Godard’s “organizing principle” is “the juxtaposition of contrary elements” for the sake of “sensory and conceptual dislocation.”

(3) Godard fragments events and works “abrupt shifts in tone and level of discourse” by “explicitly theatricalizing” his material—by references to Hollywood musicals, for example, or by “Brechtianizing” his narratives via “direct-to-the-camera declarations by the characters,” by segmenting the narrative into short, often numbered sequences. Contra Brecht, Godard also treats “ideas” as fragmentary “units of sensory and emotional stimulation.” Because his films lack “a unified point of view,” Godard’s cultural references are ambiguously refractory, protesting “the bastardization of culture” while invoking “the project” of “cultural disburdenment.” Seen positively, these shifts of viewpoint work at “bridging the difference between first-person and third-person narration” in such a way as to make “the cinematic medium” “the ultimate narrative presence.” The filmmaker is thus “the central *structural* element.” Each

film is, “simultaneously, a creative activity and a destructive one” as the director “uses up his models, his sources, his ideas.” Godard thus “subscribes to a severely alienated conception of his art.”

(4) Unlike the neorealists, Godard is less concerned with the spontaneous than with “the *convergence* of spontaneity with the emotional discipline of abstraction.” Unlike Bresson, Godard’s exercises in formal abstraction lack a sense of unity or necessity, so “the distinction between what’s essential and inessential in any given film becomes senseless.” As a result, Godard’s films partake of the contingent, the “journalistic,” expressing the ambition already evident in contemporary literature to speak “in a purer present tense.” Godard’s devotion to presentness requires the “suppression” of “story in the traditional sense—something that’s already taken place.” By rejecting the past, he rejects the psychological, the interior. He stays behavioristically “outside.” Because “organic connections” are impossible in Godard’s objectified capitalist cityscape, the only “responses of real interest,” all “revocable” and “artificial,” are “violent action, the probe of ‘ideas,’ and the transcendence of sudden, arbitrary, romantic love.” Because they are “not so much solutions as dissolutions of a problem,” such acts entail an almost masochistic (sometimes misogynist) irony that has its analogue in Godard’s fragmentary and self-criticizing style.

(5) Concurring with Sam Fuller that “Cinema is emotion,” Godard uses language as a means of gaining “emotional” or critical distance from action, hence his obsession with “the problematic character of language,” both graphic and spoken. Some “deformation of speech” is repeatedly depicted, not to mention the “many explicit discussions of language-as-a-problem.” That Godard is self-consciously “haunted by the duplicity and banality of language” is evidenced by his frequent use of prostitution as an “extended metaphor for the fate of language” and his own fate as a self-interrogating practitioner of a “restless” yet redeeming art.

“What’s Happening in America (1966)” (B29). Comprises six unnumbered segments. (1) Explains the *Partisan Review* questionnaire to which Sontag responded. (2) Takes the extent of American power as conditioning any remarks about its political or social prospects. (3) Lists “Three facts about this country”: its legacy of genocide, its acceptance of the view that slaves were not persons, the animosity toward both culture and nature unleashed by the fact of immigration. (4) Reads America’s “energy” as a “hypernatural and humanly disproportionate dynamism” “sublimated into crude materialism and acquisitiveness”—hence the continued attractiveness of the “Manifest Destiny” fantasy. (5) Takes President Johnson as “representative” of an “engineered” consensus, a “precarious acquiescence to liberal goals” that obtains despite persistent racism. Takes the contemporary split between America’s rulers and intellectuals as evidence that “our leaders are genuine yahoos,” to which fact intellectuals can hardly remain blind. Praises “young people” as the nation’s “only promise” by reference to Leslie Fiedler’s condemnation of sexual

androgyny. The new radicalism is “as much an experience as an idea,” the appreciation of which depends upon recognizing that something is “terribly wrong” with the cancerous legacy of “Western ‘Faustian’ man.” (6) Compares the “spiritual energy” released by the dislocation of nineteenth-century Jews from the ghetto with the creation, under similarly alienating circumstances, of America’s most “decent and sensitive” generation of young people, whose truths their elders would do well to heed.

“Trip to Hanoi” (B37). Annotated at A4.

- A5a *Styles of Radical Will*. London: Seeker & Warburg, 1969. 274 pp.
- A5b *Styles of Radical Will*. New York: Delta, Dell, 1970. 274 pp.  
A “New Delta edition” appeared in 1978, though we take it as a reprinting rather than a new edition. (Various sources also list a “Noonday” edition in 1976, though we have never seen one, and assume, as is often the Sontag case, that the printing lists FS&G on its title page.)
- \*A5c *Stilovi radikalne volge*. Trans. (Serbo-Croat.) Mario Susko. Zagreb: Izabranih Eseja, 1971.
- \*A5d *Radikaruna ishi no sutairu*. Trans. (Jap.) Kyoichi Kawaguchi. Tokyo: Shobunsha, 1974. 227 pp.
- \*A5e *Interpretation tendenziose: Dodici temi culturali*. Trans. (Ital.) Ettore Capriolo. Turin: Einaudi, 1975. vii+337 pp.  
Cited variously as translating A2 and A5. As it includes “The Aesthetics of Silence,” per H141, we list it here.
- \*A5f *Estilos radicales: Ensayos*. Trans. (Span.) Eduardo Goligorsky. Barcelona: Muchnik Editores, 1984 [1985?]. 292pp.
- A5g *A vontade radical: Estilos*. Trans. (Port.) João Roberto Martins Filho. São Paulo: Companhia das Letras, 1987. 262 pp.
- A5h *Styles of Radical Will*. New York: FS&G; Toronto: Collins Publishers, 1987. 274 pp.
- A5i *Styles of Radical Will*. New York: Anchor, Doubleday, 1991. 274pp.

A6 *Duet for Cannibals*. New York: FS&G; Toronto: Doubleday Canada, 1970. 129 pp. See E2, E9.

A6—described on the title page as “A Screenplay by Susan Sontag”—comprises sixty-four scenes, here arranged into larger narrative units. Passages in italics refer to “narrational” passages spoken in a spatially and temporally indeterminate voice by one character or another, always “off,” even if the character speaking is also “visible.”

“Note.” Describes the present text as midway between an initial *découpage* and the finished film; describes the process of casting, shooting, editing the film. Because the script was barely departed from in the shooting, the published version differs from the “second” version chiefly in omitting eleven sequences dropped in the editing.

“Credits” and “Cast” (See E2); the sound of a hammer.

(1) Ingrid tacks a poster of Arthur Bauer to her apartment wall, though her hand, when first seen, is hammerless.

(2) Tomas cuts himself shaving. *Ingrid refers to his upcoming appointment with Bauer.* Offers Wagner, love, and coffee. Tomas hasn’t time for coffee.

(3) Ingrid and Tomas in bed; music sounds, though the turn-table is motionless. Who sleeps, who doesn’t?

(4–5) Tomas at Bauer’s; is introduced to the work of organizing Bauer’s papers; Bauer boasts of knowing Brecht, introduces Tomas to his wife, Francesca, who, though friendly, “doesn’t like to be touched.” Francesca heaves a book through a window and leaves the room.

(6) Tomas shaves. *Ingrid identifies Francesca.*

(7) *Tomas must live with the Bauers to expedite his work.* Bauer leaves the table, to vomit (“off”); Francesca reassures Tomas. Returning, Bauer “jokes” about adultery.

(8) *Tomas recalls a night-time visit from Francesca.* She shows him Bauer’s tape recorder.

(9) At breakfast, Bauer asks Tomas to take Francesca for a walk.

(10–1) On the roof of her apartment building, then in her flat, Ingrid and Tomas express anxiety about their situation and each other. Food and affection.

(12–3) Tomas (surreptitiously?) listens to Bauer’s audiotaped confession; he is mortally ill and worried about Francesca. After Tomas hides the recorder, Bauer asks him to attend to Francesca in his absence. *Tomas cannot object.* Tomas reads from a Swedish translation of Dante’s *Paradiso* a passage about freedom and food, hunter and hunted, silence and desire; Francesca recites the original passage from memory. Bauer returns, and wonders about a phone call he didn’t get.

(14–5) As if in response to Bauer’s conspiratorial meeting with colleagues, Francesca begs Tomas to take her for a drive, but frantically changes her mind when Bauer calls after her.

(16–7) Bauer wakes Tomas, begs for help; Francesca has locked herself in the car. After nearly running Bauer down, she opens the car door. As Tomas watches, and Bauer makes love to her, Francesca smears the windshield with shaving cream.

(18–9) In a cafeteria, Ingrid and Tomas discuss Bauer and his wife; a crazy old man is asked to leave; after Ingrid and Tomas leave, he follows them down the street.

(20) Tomas listens to Bauer’s audio-journal.

(21–2) *Tomas is asked to deliver a message.* After receiving instructions and a hat from Bauer, Tomas drives to a garage and tosses a packet into a parked car.

(23) Tomas, still wearing “that awful hat,” returns to an ambivalent Ingrid; cigarettes and “the power of the will.” Awakened (apparently) by sounds of a car crash, Tomas returns to bed to find Francesca in Ingrid’s place.

(24–6) Tomas cooks, Ingrid sleeps. *Ingrid wanted Tomas to stay.* Bauer, angry, meets the returning Tomas; Bauer ponders espionage and disguises before telling Tomas that Francesca must be appeased. Bauer makes Francesca “talk” to a perplexed Tomas by slapping her, though she describes Bauer as the “kindest man in the world.” Despite Bauer’s summons, Tomas reads more Dante to Francesca; she prefers “make believe,” disguising him with a fake beard, then with “Frankenstein” head bandages. Francesca is summoned. Bauer confides in Tomas; Francesca returns, and Bauer accuses Tomas of adultery. Tomas threatens to quit, but Bauer says “it’s all a game.”

(27–9) Bauer expresses anxiety about reviewing his life, about Francesca; asks Tomas if he is in love. Tomas “thinks” he is. Bauer paces a walled garden. *Tomas pities Bauer.* Bauer calls the dog. Tomas listens as an audiotaped Bauer decides to do away with Francesca.

(30–1) Tomas and Francesca walk; questions of silence and fear, of innocence and violence, of art and murder. *Tomas is given a gun.*

(32) Ingrid reads a book by Bauer. *Quotes Ho Chi Minh.*

(33–4) Mirrors and maxims; Bauer tries out disguises. Francesca, avowedly at Bauer’s urging, caresses a hesitant Tomas, though she suddenly leaves. Tomas phones Ingrid. A bearded Bauer reports the phone is tapped and rips it out.

(35–6) Across a cafeteria table, Ingrid begs Tomas to quit his job; Tomas asks for more time. By a window, Ingrid expresses skepticism, ponders reason and power.

(37) Against Bauer’s tape-recorded promise of action, Tomas asserts (and records) his determination to be “stronger” than Bauer. A bewildered Tomas then begins conversing with the recorder regarding the progress of his work, the prospect of staying on. Bauer then enters to continue the discussion his recorder-self has already initiated with Tomas, urging the importance of the work and the trust accorded to Tomas. Tomas contradicts Bauer and reaches for his gun. Bauer displays his own pistol, also a gift from Francesca.

(38–9) *Tomas, given a day off, wants to go boating with Ingrid.* From the shore, Bauer and Francesca beckon Tomas. Leaving Ingrid, Tomas goes ashore, receives a hat, sunglasses.

(40–1) *Tomas hears the Bauers quarreling.* An anxious Tomas finds them peacefully winding yarn. Francesca locks Bauer in a closet. After sex, Tomas is awakened by Bauer’s knocking; Francesca protests that Bauer has his own key. An amiable Bauer leaves for political reasons.

(42) Bauer visits Ingrid; tales of ill health. Ingrid vows to fight for Tomas. Bauer denies influence while acknowledging Francesca’s persuasiveness. Bauer suggests an alliance.

(43–4) *Ingrid introduces Bauer's reminiscences.* Ingrid and Bauer discuss revolution over dinner; Bauer fears poison, fires the cook. Ingrid is toasted. An angry Tomas is asked to drive the cook to town. While Ingrid and Bauer have sex, Francesca watches a porno movie; Tomas returns and watches, too.

(45–6) Bauer asks whether Tomas plans to stay; Tomas wonders (via chalkboard) why he should want to. To destroy Bauer or himself. Tomas asks Ingrid to leave; she plans to stay on at Francesca's request; Tomas and Ingrid quarrel bitterly.

(47–8) *Tomas reports his sleep habits apart from Ingrid.* Tomas has retreated to his boat.

(49–51) Ingrid serves (and is served) dinner; hunger and levity. In her bedroom, Francesca offers Ingrid Italian lessons and make-over tips; mirrors and hairpieces; pajamas and a missing button. A corpselike, Francesca-like Ingrid shares the Bauers' bed; Francesca and Bauer embrace across Ingrid.

(52) Bauer reads the morning mail. *Tomas proposes himself as ransom for Ingrid.* Ingrid protests her exile.

(53–5) Tomas returns to Ingrid's to pack his things; finds her with a new hairstyle and a new lover. Angry, Ingrid declares her love for Tomas in the past tense; Tomas declares his for her in the present. Tomas stands watch outside her building.

(56–8) Bauer struggles to keep a suspicious Tomas from seeing Francesca; Tomas arrives at her room to find a coffin maker and a corpselike Francesca. Bauer professes his love of Francesca and regrets her illness-induced suicide. Tomas suspects murder. Bauer confesses and shoots himself. A revived Francesca calls Tomas back and describes him as her accomplice in helping Bauer to die. They burn Bauer's papers.

(59–63) Ingrid arrives at Bauer's and finds Tomas, his head bandaged, listening to one of Bauer's tapes; as Ingrid begs forgiveness and binds herself to Tomas with his bandage, Francesca joins them. Tomas and Ingrid depart in her VW while Francesca and Bauer gaze on from an upstairs window.

(64) Dvořák and a frozen sea.

A6a *Duet for Cannibals: A Screenplay.* London: Allen Lane, 1974. 129pp.

A7 *Pornografien som forestillingsverden.* Trans. (Norw.) Aase Rørvik. Oslo: J.W.Cappelens, 1971. 59 pp.

The A5 text of "The Pornographic Imagination" (B30) is the basis for this book-format translation.

A7a *Porno grafien som forestillingsverden.* 2d ed. Trans. (Norw.) Aase Rørvik. Oslo: J.W.Cappelens, 1991. 63 pp.

Reprints [A7](#), with an “Etterord” profiling Sontag by editors Trond Berg Eriksen, Håkon Market, and Eivind Tjønneland.

A8 *A pusztulás képei*. Edited by Levente Osztoivits. Trans. (Hungarian) Árpád Göncz et al. Afterword by István Bart. Glossary and notes by Levente Osztoivits. Budapest: Európa Könyvkiadó, 1972. 333 pp.

Collects “The Aesthetics of Silence,” “The Pornographic Imagination,” “Marat/Sade/Artaud,” “Reflections on *The Deputy*,” “Bergman’s *Persona*,” “Godard,” “Spiritual Style in the Films of Robert Bresson,” “Resnais’ *Muriel*,” “The Imagination of Disaster,” “Happenings: An Art of Radical Juxtaposition,” and “Notes on ‘Camp.’” The title of the collection is taken from the Hungarian phrase for “The Imagination of Disaster.” See [H27](#).

A9 *Bijgedachten over de bevrijding van de vrouw*. Amsterdam: Wij; Odijk: Sjaloom, 1973. 28 pp.

This pamphlet-format edition of “The Third World of Women” has ten subheaded sections, corresponding generally to the ten-question format of [B41a](#), which served as the base-text for this translation, though the [A9](#) layout (paragraphing, roman vs. italic fonts) is most idiosyncratic. (Quotations are from the [B41b](#) text, as checked against the Dutch.)

“Bespiegelingen over de vrouwenemancipatie.” (A third-person headnote explains the provenance of the essay in *Libre* and *Les temps modernes*.) Addresses the question: “At what stage now is the struggle for women’s liberation?” Answers by extended comparison of sexism with chattel slavery; where the Industrial Revolution occasioned reconsideration of the naturalness of slavery, the “Ecological Turning Point” undoes the link of biology and destiny by showing how masculinity and femininity are “morally defective and historically obsolete concepts.” Avows the feminist revolution will be both conservative (ecological) and radical (in going beyond orthodox Marxist analysis). Notes the “reformist” danger in the view that liberating women will liberate men; the “common front” cliché conceals “the harsh realities of the power relations that determine all dialogue between the sexes.”

“Seksuele en/of economische bevrijding.” Resists the equation of sexual and economic liberty, while avowing the value of knowing “what women are being liberated from and for.” Attacks the idea of “sexual liberation” when “the very conception of sexuality is an instrument of repression.” As separatism is finally impossible, we must “erase” those distinctions that result from “otherness” so that “women and men will no longer *primarily* define each other as potential sexual partners.” A more “genuine bisexuality” will result.

“Vrouwenstrijd en klassestrijd.” Sees left-revolutionary class politics as “irrelevant to the struggle of women as women” because that struggle must attack “mental habits” that could easily survive economic reconstruction, while allowing that only something like socialism allows the possibility of “forms of life that would liberate women.”

“Vrouwen geen klasse.” Because the oppression of women is “the most fundamental type of repression,” it is irreducible to class oppression; avows (with Virginia Woolf) that fascism is the modern form of patriarchy.

“Waarom deelname aan het arbeidsproces.” Allows that modern labor is alienating, but doubly so for women who take responsibility for domestic work, hence the importance of attacking sexual stereotypes and the “bureaucratic style” that labels men as producers and women as consumers.

“Vormen van organisatie.” Because “One of the purposes of political action is to educate those who stage” it, because women must learn “to talk to each other,” women must organize separately to undertake (various) “extreme” acts.

“Doelstellingen.” Prefers to distinguish between reformist and radical (rather than long vs. short term) objectives, while allowing that reformist change is “worth struggling for.”

“Het gezin.” Though the nuclear family is often the only approximation of “unalienated personal relations,” it remains (for that very reason) an instrument of a patriarchal “authority” based on “ownership” rather than wisdom or community.

“Recht op abortus.” Though a matter of “concrete, immediate” need, abortion is “a reformist demand” unless “taken as a step in a chain of demands.”

“Politick perspectief.” Denies she is “liberated” and accuses women who “complacently accept” privilege as participating in oppression. Though “The first responsibility of a ‘liberated’ woman is to lead the fullest, freest, and most imaginative life she can,” her “second responsibility is her solidarity with other women.”

A10 *Brother Carl*. New York: FS&G; Toronto: Doubleday Canada, 1974. xvi +174 pp. See E5, G40, G55.

A10 effectively has three texts, one a series of production stills, another a script of sixty-six scenes (arranged here, often via paired actions, into larger narrative units). The third text is a matter of negativity, of A10 segments marked as cut from E5, marks that invite readers to envision yet another text, another film. (Italics below refer to this “erased” text.)

An untitled preface discusses themes of “doubleness” and “silence”: the “laconic” invitation to make a second film in Sweden, “No inquiry” about a next film after a screening of E5; a script evolved through dialogue and shot in “black-to-white”; Diaghilev and Nijinsky, mutism and autism; shooting in two languages; “intersecting” couples (E2) versus couples *and* children (E5), novels and films; miracles failed and accomplished.

“Credits.” See E5.

“Cast.” See E5.

“Note.” Specifies sequences cut or foreshortened, running time, etc.

(1) Anna climbs into a cabinet in her parents’ Stockholm apartment; Carl joins Anna in a wall enclosure of an abandoned seaside fort (see segment 64); credits.

(2–4) Peter, Anna, and the phone: Peter tells an unresponsive Anna it’s bedtime; Karen returns and reports “a little scene with the police.” *Peter takes Anna to her*

room. Carl, at the seashore, fishing. Karen answers phone, accepts invitation, begins to undress; Peter goes out for a newspaper, returns; Karen caresses his hair.

(5–6) Lena orders a break in the rehearsal of a fight scene; tells her (pregnant) assistant to “Coax” an author. Lena stops fight, sees Karen. On the catwalk above the stage, they discuss migraines and companionship, hatred and longing, energy and love. The Sandler flat: while Anna knocks on a windowpane, Peter and Karen discuss how long Karen will be gone.

(7–8) A ferryboat docks, Karen and Lena disembark. Lena predicts Martin’s absence. Martin greets them at the dockside pavilion, kisses Lena; an uncomfortable Karen lets Martin carry her suitcase to the hotel.

(9–12) At Martin’s cottage: he lights a fire, Lena urges conversation; responding to Martin’s coldness, Karen leaves, sees Carl fishing from rocks (see segment 3). Lena pulls Martin to the floor, caresses, then combs, his hair; Martin asks Karen if they are making her uncomfortable, or moved, or sexually excited; rejecting Lena’s attentions, Martin sets his hair afire. Contests and losers; Martin answers “No.”

(13–4) Lena avows that her desire is not humiliating, that Martin misses her; she walks onto hotel balcony. Karen calls her name. Fighting then vs. fighting now; doubts and undenied rumors; acknowledgment vs. annihilation. Karen refuses to leave. Lena imagines Martin will ask her to stay. Karen at the window, dawn; she closes the curtain, her voice speaks negatives (“Not to dream of saving anyone. Not to long to be saved”). Karen leaves the room.

(15–7) At Martin’s cottage: he and Karen discuss flying, goodness, resurrection. Martin leads Karen to his bed, though she does not believe his desire, hence understands why he left Lena; urges him to avoid game-playing with Lena. Outside, Karen encounters Carl; Martin pulls Carl away, explains Carl’s presence; as Karen tries (fails) to make Carl’s acquaintance, shots of Anna are cut in; Carl watches Karen leave.

(18) Lena and Karen, a mother and noisy twin boys, at the pavilion cafe; Karen and Lena discuss Carl: *is he or isn’t he Carl Norén* and who frightened whom? The boys play hide and seek. Lena avoids the “old story” of Martin and Carl. Karen “warns her of Martin, of his strength; a boy collides with table, coffee spills; Karen wants to help Lena get cleaned up. Lena reluctantly accepts.

(19) At the seashore: Carl, his whistle, shells, dolls; Martin and Lena, belief vs. hate; Martin and Carl, going home vs. staying, headshakes vs. smiles, Lena wants Carl to stop. Karen sun-bathes; Lena offers Karen her (white) sweater and proposes to stay another week; Lena and Martin quarrel about Carl. Karen looks at Carl, mindscreens Anna and a (black) sweater, asks about Carl’s smile; an unstuck Carl wanders into the water; Martin leads him back.

(20) In a storm-torn grove: Carl reclines, Martin and Karen talk, *about being, goodness*, becoming; Carl’s attentiveness, desire; Carl tosses a rock to Karen. Lena arrives bearing flowers; Carl drops his; Lena embraces Martin, Karen;

*talking about love, Lena's for strangers, Martin's for Lena, Karen's for Lena, kisses vs. warnings, Carl moves closer, if still distanced; love enough for Carl?*

(21–2) Martin's cottage: Carl works out, Martin too; not wanting to dance, or think; Carl in the bathtub, submersion and redemption; Martin dresses Carl; Carl wanted to dance?

(23–5) In a clearing: fires and stories, Carl vs. his parents, parents vs. monsters, mother vs. father. In the hotel: Lena's Carl story vs. Martin's, comedy vs. horror. In the clearing: Martin vs. Carl's parents, worry vs. love, the obscenity of aging, Carl in his blanket.

(26–31) *In the hotel: Karen urges Lena to sleep, answers phone; outside the hotel: Karen hurries to Carl, asks about Martin, Carl hurries away, she follows; at the bathhouses, Carl tries to hide, Karen finds him, wants to talk; Carl ponders the ratio of good to bad, thought vs. silence, a blonde intruder, Carl's fear of badness, of Martin, of tears. Stockholm: Anna listens to a coffee mill, Karen and Martin's voices discuss Carl; at Martin's: Carl caresses Karen, avows he's never had a woman, begins kicking the wall, because "It's not perfect"?*

(32–4) An abandoned factory, a favorite place; Karen and Martin enter, Lena walks on; thinking (or not) about Carl; Lena finds Martin and Karen; Carl tosses gravel at factory windows, Lena is furious; outside the factory, Carl avows "Women are wonderful," but not touchable; Lena heaves gravel at Carl, becomes herself "a statue," then walks away.

(35–41) A montage of couples, sounds bleed across images: Karen drives Martin to the hotel; like vs. want. Lena and Carl in the woods, a letter for Martin, ripped to shreds; Carl digs, Karen talks. In the car; what happened to Carl? In the woods, Karen disavows hate, sounds like Carl.

(42–3) Carl's cabin: voices "over," forgive vs. cure; Carl awakes, Lena enters. Icons and empty frames. Lena's caresses, Carl's resistance; blankets and questions; impotence and masochism; reversals and revelations; Martin with a flashlight. Martin's cottage: coffee and music; Lena tells Martin about the (long awaited) letter; he asks if she read it ("I'd rather die than tell you"), she asks if "It's true"; torture and/as distance; lovers and reasons ("Touch me").

(44–8) *At the hotel: Lena, pills, an unsealed envelope; Karen sleeps; Lena at the water line, hesitation, submersion, Martin at work. On the shore: Carl's whistle, Lena's corpse; Carl's caresses, Lena's goodness, shouts and sobs ("Wake up!"). Martin arrives: "distraught vacancy" and a glance.*

(49–50) Martin's cottage: Karen and Martin, anger vs. grief, difficulty and monstrosity; Martin seeks Carl. *Carl's cabin: Carl digs a hole, buries his possessions, a crucifix, a coat.*

(51) A Stockholm cemetery: Martin and Carl, Karen and Peter; Carl believes in miracles, refuses to leave Lena's grave, Karen vs. Martin.

(52–6) The Sandler flat: Karen's dream recounted, Lena's unburied corpse, *the seaside hotel, a window, a glance. A Stockholm theater, Karen and Martin, more of her dream, "As if [Lena] were breathing," a tear, open eyes. The Sandler flat: more dream, Lena's weak gladness, Karen's great happiness. Peter echoes*

*Martin*. The theater: the story ends, Martin echoes Peter, interprets Karen's dream, taking it away; Karen wants her grief. *A Stockholm garden: Martin and Karen; the weight of death, the guilt of survival, happiness and possibility*.

(57–8) *The Sandler flat: Karen and Peter; fear vs. seduction, rain sounds, an embrace*. Two weeks later: Anna and Karen, a book and an embrace; Anna and Carl, two shells, love and miracles, an unfinished meal, Karen and Peter.

(59) Stockholm opera house: Peter and Martin, intimidation and photography, two young women, what to do about Carl, a trust fund and anger, a letter from Carl (cut-in shot of the old fort), Peter had better get Karen ("I know where he must have taken her").

(60–6) The old fort: Anna and Carl exit, into sunshine. Karen, Martin, Peter arrive. Carl kneels before Anna, blows his whistle, leads her back to the fort. Karen, Martin, Peter arrive (again). Anna and Carl, he sees the sun, sees Anna, carries her to the shore. Martin, Karen, Peter: "Don't go closer." *Carl carries Anna to the water, wets her face*, urges her to think, talk; she laughs, he laughs, he sees Martin, Karen, Peter, flings himself at Anna; Karen speaks Anna's name (finally); Anna crawls away from Carl, says "He's heavy." Only Martin knows "that Carl is lost." A family restored.

A11 *Antonin Artaud: Selected Writings*. Edited by Susan Sontag. Translated by Helen Weaver. Notes by Sontag and Don Eric Levine. New York: FS&G, 1976. lix+661 pp.

"Artaud" (D22). Comprises seven unnumbered segments.

(1) Equates the urge to "disestablish the 'author'" with the challenge to literature that is "literary modernism." Premodern authorship is a role "inescapably responsible to" (if critical of) a particular social order. The modern author (Nietzsche, Artaud) "disestablishes" himself and his works by refusing responsibility to external criteria (veracity, relevance, etc.). Thus is "writing" redefined "as a medium in which a singular personality heroically exposes itself" via "the labors of subjectivity," labors of which "the work" is only a fragment, an "incomplete" part of the "total book."

(2) Sees Artaud's "vast collection of fragments" as figuring "the artist as pure victim of his consciousness." His metaphors "treat the mind either as property to which one never holds clear title (or whose title one has lost) or as a physical substance that is intransigent, fugitive, unstable." Though his metaphors are material, Artaud's "demand on the mind amounts to...philosophical idealism." The fight between "physical sensations" and his (in)ability "to give them verbal form" is "the psychodramatic plot of everything Artaud wrote." In asserting a "seamless" and "utopian" relation of mind and body, Artaud "upholds the democracy of mental claims, the right of every level, tendency, and quality of mind to be heard."

(3) Sees Artaud as a "manic" Hegelian in denying "that there is any difference between art and thought, between poetry and truth." Art-making is thus "a trope for the functioning of all consciousness—of life itself." Although Artaud found surrealism confining—Artaud was "as extravagantly heavy-hearted as the

Surrealists were optimistic”—“his taste was Surrealist,” for example, his “disdain for ‘realism,’” “his enthusiasms for the art of the mad and the non-professional,” the assumption “that art has a ‘revolutionary’ mission.” While retaining “the romantic imperative to close the gap between art (and thought) and life,” Artaud more aggressively than the Surrealists insists that separating works from the (tautological) totality and from each other (as “works”) is “self-defeating.” Thus “Artaud assimilates all art to dramatic performance.”

(4) Describes Artaud’s life as an effort “to formulate and inhabit” a “total art form”—of which theater, in its “plurality of materials,” for being “carnal, corporeal,” is a better exemplar than poetry or cinema. Artaud’s “criterion of spectacle,” by contrast with the theater of words, “is sensory violence.” Artaud’s conception of theater is Platonic in its moralism; “Art must be cognitive,” must disavow “all forms of mediation,” must avoid the tyranny of the canonical. Yet, unlike Plato, Artaud is a materialist who seeks to reduce the gaps between author and actor, actor and audience, mind and body. Where Plato assumes “the unbridgeable difference between life and art,” Artaud implies that “this difference can be vaulted” if “the spectacle is sufficiently— that is, excessively— violent.” Contra Hume’s, Artaud’s use of the theater/mind analogy emphasizes, not reflection of, but changes in, consciousness, via experimentation. In seeking “a total art form,” Artaud completely rethinks “one art form.” Though his theatrical practice “left virtually no trace,” Artaud’s writings on theater are rivaled only by Brecht’s.

(5) Sees Artaud as animated by a “medical” (rather than “historical”) view of cultural radicalism, derived from variously primitive or archaic social models. Such a view is decidedly “*anti*-political,” hence driven “toward a theology of culture”; “All Artaud’s work is about salvation.” Ironically, Artaud’s ideas about theater—which derive authority precisely from “his inability to put them into practice”—have been largely “assimilated as a new theatrical tradition,” have thus been robbed of their “true adversary power.” Because “creating in a secular culture an institution that can manifest a dark, hidden reality is a contradiction in terms,” Artaud gave up on theater in 1935. His subsequent writings “took on a prophetic tone” as he sought to “exercise directly, in his own person, the emotional power...he had wanted for the theater.”

(6) Describes Artaud’s darkly religious project via themes and tropes of Gnosticism: dualism, demonism, abandonment, persecution, humiliation, transgression. Artaud’s ideal theater would enact “a secularized Gnostic rite,” of “transformation” through “a violent act of spiritual alchemy.” Gnostic freedom is individual, inhuman, sexually embodied. “Against this fallen body, defiled by matter, he sets the fantasied attainment of a pure body—divested of organs and vertiginous lusts.” And just as “the body weighs down and deforms the soul, so does language, for language is thought turned into ‘matter.’” Hence art, language, must redeem by self-transcendence. In its dualism, Gnosticism partakes of paranoia and schizophrenia—trends that Artaud followed to their logical conclusion in seeking a wisdom that “cancels itself” via “unintelligibility.”

(7) In offering “the greatest *quantity* of suffering in the history of literature,” Artaud tempts readers to remember he was crazy. But to do so is to assume the difference between “art” and “symptom” that Artaud contests, and to forget the sense in which “definitions of sanity and madness are arbitrary—are, in the largest sense, political.” Because “What Artaud has left behind is work that cancels itself, thought that outbids thought, recommendations that cannot be enacted,” the reader can only be “inspired” by him, “scorched,” “changed.”

- A11a*                    *A la rencontre d'Artaud*. Trans. (Fr.) Gérard H. Durand. Paris: Christian Bourgois Éditeur, 1976. 123 pp.  
This book-format translation of [D22](#) has generated much bibliographic confusion, regarding its title (listed in some sources as *A la recherche d'Artaud*) and its publication date (though printed in late 1975, the copyright date is 1976).
- \**A11b*                    *Antonin Artaud-ron*. Trans. (Jap.) Tsutomu Iwasaki. Kobe: Kobe Books, 1976. 105 pp.  
Translates [D22](#).
- A11c*                    *Approximation a Artaud*. Trans. (Span.) Francesc Parcerisas. Barcelona: Editorial Lumen, 1976. 68 pp.  
Translates [D22](#).
- A11d*                    *Lihan estetiikka: Teatteri Artaud'n mukaan*. Trans. (Fin.) Riikka Stewen. Helsinki: Kustannus Oy Odessa, 1986. 94 pp.  
Translates [D22](#).
- A11e*                    *Antonin Artaud: Selected Writings*. Edited by Susan Sontag. Translated by Helen Weaver. Notes by Sontag and Don Eric Levine. Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 1988. lix+661pp.

*A12 On Photography*. New York: FS&G; Toronto: McGraw-Hill Ryerson, 1977. 207 pp. See [E31](#).

(Note: OCLC lists a “Book Club” edition of [A12](#). Its publication data are identical, though it has 182 pages. We have seen a copy of this—many libraries hold it—and it is the same in substance as [A12](#). It lacks CIP data, or any marks identifying it *as* a book club publication. Per our policy not to list book club or private printings, we are only noting it here.)

Untitled Headnote. Describes how the complex suggestiveness of photography expanded one essay into six.

“In Plato’s Cave” ([B44](#)). Comprises six unnumbered segments.

(1) Contrasts the “images of the truth” provided by photography to those provided (chiefly) by books. Where written descriptions are interpretations of the world, photographs “do not seem to be statements about the world so much as pieces of it,” making the camera “the ideal arm of consciousness in its acquisitive mood.” Photographs mime the world; while reducing it, they are reducible; while packaging the world, they too are packaged.

(2) Though photographs seem “to have a more innocent, and therefore more accurate, relation” to reality than other representations—allowing their utility as evidence that incriminates or justifies—“the work that photographers do is no generic exception to the usually shady commerce between art and truth.” Its seeming passivity—despite the self-conscious interpretive “standards” photographers impose on their subjects—“is photography’s ‘message,’ its aggression.” Photography’s “imperial” or “industrial” scope encouraged, in reaction, that democratic “mentality which looks at the whole world as a set of potential photographs.”

(3) Like other “mass arts,” photography is practiced mainly as “social rite, a defense against anxiety, and a tool of power.” As the extended family gave way to the nuclear family, photography intervened to “supply the token presence” of distant relatives, just as tourist photographs confirm the tourist’s presence to distant places. Photography, however, can also be a means of refusing experience by converting it “to a search for the photogenic,” thus establishing a “voyeuristic” relation to the world that levels the meaning of all events.

(4) Photography’s perversity is evident in the distance it places between photographer and subject, despite the sexual component of photographic looking. The camera is “a predatory weapon”; it “violates” its subjects, turning “people into objects that can be symbolically possessed.” If cameras are preferable to guns, the cost is an “image-choked world” that evidences our nostalgia for a world gone by. Photographic reverie eroticizes social distance, as if photography’s magic can “contact or lay claim to another reality.”

(5) Because “moral feelings” are historically “embedded,” the “images that mobilize conscience are always linked to a given historical situation,” which largely determines how a given photo is understood, if there is ideological “space” enough for it to be taken at all. The ideology of modernity—wherein “Photographs shock insofar as they show something novel”—ups the moral ante, making sorrow and suffering at once “less real” and “more ordinary.” The ethical element of photographs is fragile, especially with the passage of time, which “eventually positions most photographs” at the “level of art.”

(6) Despite its purported “realism,” photography redefines knowledge as discontinuous, making “reality atomic, manageable, and opaque,” simultaneously present and mysterious. But this acceptance of mystery is “the opposite of understanding” because “understanding is rooted in the ability to say no.” Photographic knowledge of the world is spatial. Understanding, by contrast, is a matter of how something functions, is therefore temporal. Photographic knowledge is thus “a semblance of knowledge.” The poignant eroticism of our relation to photography has become a compulsion, “an aesthetic consumerism to which everyone is now addicted.”

“America, Seen Through Photographs, Darkly” (B46). Comprises six unnumbered segments.

(1) Contrasts the Whitmanesque demystification of art by life to the way contemporary American “arts—notably photography—now” aspire “to do the demystifying.”

(2) Contrasts the “idealized” beauty of amateur photographers with the approach of professionals, which has become, in the Warhol era, “a parody of Whitman’s evangel” in making everything equally (un)important. Takes Walker Evans, by contrast with Stieglitz, as figuring this break with the “heroic mode,” though Evans was “leveling up, not down.”

(3) Takes Steichen’s 1955 “Family of Man” exhibit as a “last sigh of the Whitmanesque erotic embrace of the nation.” Despite the underlying denial of a “historical understanding of reality” shared by Steichen and Diane Arbus (where one renders “history and politics irrelevant” by “universalizing” experience, the other does so “by atomizing it, into horror”), the Arbus retrospective of 1972 measures the distance traveled from Whitman’s transcendent picture of human and poetic values, not only in the photographs themselves but in the responses to them (which mistake their “dissociated point of view” for “candor”). Arbus was fascinated with “sameness”; “Anybody Arbus photographed was a freak.” Likewise, her habitual use of the “frontal pose”—suggesting her subject’s self-revealing consent—allows Arbus to maintain “the Whitmanesque imperative: treat all moments as of equal consequence,” even as she makes her subjects “seem like images of themselves.”

(4) Takes Arbus’s 1971 suicide as occasion for pondering the difference between the involuntary revelation of personal pain typical of heroic avant-garde writers and the *willed* effort of Arbus “to *collect* images that are painful,” which may as readily follow from (lead to) the desire “not to feel more but to feel less.” Though it brings us closer to the truth “of the arbitrariness of the taboos constructed by art and morals,” by “lowering the threshold of what is terrible,” “art changes morals,” allowing the photographer, like Arbus, to adopt an exteriorized, “supertourist,” point of view.

(5) Compares Arbus to Nathanael West as they embody or anticipate the 1960s sensibility; each “came from a verbally skilled, compulsively health-minded” Jewish family, and each was “fascinated by the deformed and the mutilated” as a means of experiencing “psychological adversity.” Compares Arbus to Warhol; each was involved with commercial art, yet Arbus reacted *against* the commercial aesthetic—advancing “life as a horror show as the antidote to life as a bore”—and she lacked Warhol’s ironic ambivalence toward evil.

(6) Though Arbus professed a nonjudgmental, surrealist taste “for the grotesque,” the limited range of her subjects amounts to “a very powerful” and “left-liberal” judgment of the surrealist “idiot village” that Whitman’s America has lately become.

“Melancholy Objects” (B46). Comprises six unnumbered segments.

(1) Despite its reputation for (mechanical) realism, photography has effected the “Surrealist takeover of the modern sensibility” where painting, poetry, even overtly “Surrealist” photography failed.

(2) Though Surrealists mistakenly associated surrealism with “something universal,” “What renders a photograph surreal” is its locality, its “pathos as a message from time past, and the concreteness of its intimations about social class.” In exploring and displaying sex and poverty, photography “marks the confluence of the Surrealist counter-culture and middle-class social adventurism.” In crossing spatial and social borders, like Baudelaire’s *flâneur*, the photographer becomes “a tourist in other people’s reality,” and eventually in his own. “What is surreal is the distance imposed, and bridged,” by photography, which renders all subjects “interesting.”

(3) Distinguishes between photographers as scientists and as moralists; takes August Sander’s “photographic catalogue of the German people” as instancing the former. Unlike Arbus, Sander saw “no mystery” in society; like Muybridge, he dispelled misconceptions by “atomizing” reality. Despite his nonjudgmental approach, Sander’s “eclectic style,” adjusted to suit the social class of his subjects, betrays “class condescension.” This formal distance or complicity, by contrast with the greater randomness of American photographers like Walker Evans, is finally “nihilistic.”

(4) Contrasts (socially, visually) static European photography to the more partisanly romantic yet more “predatory” relation of American photography to spatial and social reality. Though photographers like Lewis Hine sought to “awaken conscience,” such work still reflects an “urge to appropriate an alien reality” by joining the “scandalous” and the “beautiful.” A similar urge is evident in the colonialist alliance “between photography and tourism,” which allows impatient and nonscientific Americans to take “possession,” of the landscape, of the ineffable, of loss, by taking pictures.

(5) Photographic surrealism keys on the ambiguous status of photographs, as artifacts, as “found objects”; photo collections are both montage and (cut rate) history, though this “Surrealist purchase on history also implies an undertow of melancholy” regarding “the injuries of time.” Because in recording time photography “scrambles” moral and historical distinctions, a common way of presenting or reanchoring photographs, themselves quotations, is to match them with quotations, as in Bob Adelman’s *Down Home* and Michael Lesy’s *Wisconsin Death Trip*. Compares such books to Sherwood Anderson’s *Winesburg, Ohio*; though fiction can explain more fully than photography, photography is more persuasive (and more reactionary) for having “the authority of a document.”

(6) Contrasts the archaeological literary criticism of Walter Benjamin, a project of “salvaging” a past from the ruins of history via surrealist quotation, with photography’s “de-creation of the past” via the ironic “fabrication of a new, parallel reality.” Because “The photographer’s ardor for a subject has no essential relation to its content or value,” the effort of photography “is to defy and subvert” traditional “classification and evaluation,” rendering everything beautiful and perishable. Modern alienation is thus surreal in that it expresses “discontent with reality,” not by “longing for *another* world,” but by seeking “to

reproduce *this* one.” Where cinema preserves “flow in time,” photographs still (and distort) time. Where Marx sought not only to understand but to change the world, photographers “instead propose that we collect it.”

“The Heroism of Vision” (B48). Comprises four unnumbered segments.

(1) Explores the paradoxical relationships of beauty and truth by comparing painting and photography. Despite the hope that photography “could indeed reconcile the claims of truth and the need to find the world beautiful,” the “camera has ended by effecting a tremendous promotion of the value of appearances,” thereby “changing the very idea of reality.”

(2) Contrasts the concept of a universal, impersonal, “natural” seeing with the discovery “that nobody takes the same picture of the same thing,” which made “photographic seeing” a “new way for people to see and a new activity for them to perform,” an “heroic” quasi-anthropological activity that captured far-flung monuments and created new ones right at home. Discusses the “counter-influence” of photography on painting and vice versa while insisting—by reference to the importance attached by viewers to knowing what a photograph is *of*—that where “The painter constructs, the photographer discloses.” Contrasts Thoreau’s “polysensual” and ethically “contextual” take on the relation of knowing and seeing to the idea of “seeing for seeing’s sake” cultivated by modernism. Takes modern poetry rather than painting—in its concern for “concreteness” and “autonomy,” its “commitment to pure seeing” apart from natural context—as the modern art closest to photography.

(3) Though photographers “appropriated the rhetoric of vanguard art” in assuming the “Blakean task of cleansing the senses,” photography privileges sight alone, hence “a kind of dissociative seeing” that “has to be constantly renewed with new shocks.” The “attrition” by which “certain conventions of beauty get used up” is thus “moral as well as perceptual.” Despite a shift from the “formal” perfection favored by Weston to “Darker, time-bound models of beauty,” photography, if only in making reality pathetic, “still beautifies,” still abides by “aesthetic double standards.” Evokes Wittgenstein to claim that meaning is a matter of use, and that the proliferation of images, their shifts of time and context, inevitably drain them of meaning, of socially useful truth.

(4) Attacks “the ideology of humanism”—which enables photographers to make “everything homologous,” “interesting”—because “the truths that can be rendered in a dissociated moment” have “a very narrow relation to the needs of understanding.”

“Photographic Evangels” (B56). Comprises six unnumbered segments.

(1) Despite photography’s acceptability, professional photographers remain defensive and provide “contradictory accounts” of what they know and do.

(2) Photography is interpreted “either as a lucid and precise” knowing or “as a pre-intellectual, intuitive mode of encounter.” Where pioneers of photography saw it as rigorous asceticism, “knowing without knowing,” more modern practitioners willingly disavow “any ambition to pre-visualize the image.” Though defenses of photography typically try to “paper over” the “difference

between photography conceived as ‘true expression’ and photography conceived...as faithful recording,” both ways of “opposing self and world” “presuppose that photography... shows us reality as we had *not* seen it before.” In presuming “a prior alienation from or devaluation of reality,” photography evinces “an aggressive relation to all subjects” and an “inherently equivocal” and perpetually contested relationship between self and world.

(3) Explores the relation of photography to fine art as photography’s “first line of defense,” though a line of defense, owing to “the harried status of any notion of art,” that is “far from stable.” Though photography’s “promiscuous” or “voracious way of seeing” counterposes aesthetic standards, photographers “continue to take shelter (if only covertly) in the defiled but still prestigious precincts of art.” Indeed, photography “is the most successful vehicle of modernist taste” in its pop-representational 1960s version.

(4) Takes the inclusive art-institutional response to photography as contradicting the “functional” and impersonal aspect of photographs, making all photographs “studies in the possibilities of photography.” The “equivocal” status of photography, as between document and artifact, “explains the chronic defensiveness and extreme mutability of photographic taste.” Though ostensibly neutral, the formalist criteria of “photographic seeing” are “powerfully judgmental about subjects and about styles,” and antithetical to photographic authorship and (at least for the moment) to “noble subjects.”

(5) Contrasts the evaluation terms of painting (authenticity, craftsmanship) with the more “meager” language of photography criticism. What most distinguishes painting’s “aura” from photography’s is a “different relation to time”; time works against paintings, for photographs (“all photographs are interesting...if they are old enough”), a process of “leveling up” only accelerated by photography’s acceptance in museums and antithetical to evaluative standards or to historical (vs. historicist) understanding.

(6) Contests the myth that photography freed painting (or literature) from “the drudgery” of representation. Sees photography as less an art than a medium, like language. Via its “peculiar capacity to turn all its subjects into works of art,” photography “is the prototype” of “both the modernist high arts and the commercial arts: the transformation of arts into meta-arts or media.” Contra Pater, “Now all art aspires to the condition of photography.”

“The Image-World” (B57). Comprises five unnumbered segments.

(1) Compares the anti-illusionisms of Plato and Feuerbach as prologue to the claim that photography blurs the contrast between “copy” and “original”; photography is able “to usurp reality” because it is both image and “trace.” Photography also allows a consumerist, secondhand form of experience, and allows as well, through duplication and classification, “knowledge dissociated from and independent of experience,” so that reality itself becomes a “kind of writing, which has to be decoded.” Indeed, the naturalistic inflation of appearances (as in Balzac, as in photography) is a modernist match for Plato’s

deflation of appearances in that both assume appearance to be the primary stuff of experience.

(2) Photographs are taken (by travelers) or collected (by the confined) as if to compensate for (hence exacerbate) “an increasingly depleted sense of reality.” Compares photographic recall to Proust’s more strenuously literary efforts at confirming existence, though such confirmation implies that our relation to the present is always already a matter of inference, of indirection.

(3) Describes photographic alienation as the flip-side of photographic narcissism; in both, reality is distorted, experience is displaced, condensed. Discusses Antonioni’s documentary film *Chung Kuo*, as instancing “the distinctive passivity of someone who is a spectator twice over.” Contrasts Antonioni’s “interesting” montage aesthetic and the official (“continuous,” “ideal,” monocular) aesthetic appealed to by Antonioni’s Chinese critics; takes the “modern” or “pluralistic” view of meaning as akin to “a photographic overview” that erases distinctions in the name of a “spurious unity” in which “Images are always compatible” even when “the realities they depict are not.”

(4) Correlates the contradiction between the aesthetic and the instrumental uses of photography with the divorce of public from private experience in capitalist culture; greater detachment from politics encourages ever more “narcissistic uses” of the camera and ever more scope to public “surveillance.” Compares the Chinese dictatorship of “the good” with the modernist dictatorship of “the interesting” in wondering “whether the function of the image-world created by cameras could be other” than the current one, in which “Social change is replaced by a change in images.”

(5) Because image consumption always requires “more images,” having “a camera can inspire something akin to lust.” Cameras are thus “the antidote and the disease,” making it “less and less plausible to reflect upon our experience” in Platonic image/thing terms. The analogy of photographs and trash suggests that “a better way for the real world to include the one of images” will “require an ecology” of both.

“A Brief Anthology of Quotations (Homage to W.B.)” “Make picture of kaleidoscope” urges William H. Fox Talbot in the last of the sixty-four passages collected here, an urging the other passages embody as they lead up to it. “W.B.” doubtless refers to Walter Benjamin; the idea of “quotations” refers to Benjamin’s “ideal project,” a “pious work of salvage,” as it is discussed in “Melancholy Objects.” In bringing together various discourses on photography—from photographers, philosophers, novelists, advertising copywriters—Sontag both salvages and renews the discourse of *On Photography*, showing what an “ecology” of images, some “other” way of using them, might look like, even while eschewing (hence complicating our sense of) the literally photographic.

\*A12a                    *On Photography*. London: Allen Lane, 1978. 207 pp.

\*A12b                    *On Photography*. New York: Delta, Dell, 1978. 207 pp.

- Though various sources confirm this publication date, the earliest we've seen is Feb. 1980—per the fifth printing.
- \*A12c *Sulla fotografia: Realtà e immagine nella nostra società*. Trans. (Ital.) Ettore Capriolo. Turin: Einaudi, 1978. 179 pp.
- \*A12d *Über Fotografie*. Trans. (Ger.) Mark W.Rien and Gertrud Baruch. Munich: Hanser, 1978. 194pp.
- \*A12e *Ha-illumkere'i ha-tequfa*. Trans. (Heb.) Yoram Bronovsky. Tel Aviv: Am Oved, 1979. 197 pp.
- \*A12f *La photographie*. Trans. (Fr.) Gérard-Henri Durand and Guy Durand. Paris: Seuil, 1979. 220 pp.
- \*A12g *On Photography*. Edited by Toshikazu Kashiwagi and Ken Inoue. Tokyo: Eihosha, 1979.  
A textbook edition of [A12](#).
- A12h *On Photography*. Harmondsworth, UK: Penguin, 1979. 207 pp.  
[A12h](#) has gone through multiple reprintings, at least one of which lists London as the publication venue.
- \*A12i *Over fotografie*. Trans. (Dutch) Henny Scheepmaker. Utrecht and Aartselaar: Bruna, 1979. 160pp.
- \*A12j *Shashinron*. Trans. (Jap.) Ko□jin Kondo□. Tokyo: Sho□bunsha, 1979.221pp.
- \*A12k *Sobre la fotografía*. Trans. (Span.) Carlos Gardini. Buenos Aires: Editorial Sudamericana, 1980. 217 pp.
- \*A12l *Über Fotografie*. Trans. (Ger.) Mark W.Rien and Gertrud Baruch. Frankfurt am Main: Fischer-Taschenbuch-Verlag, 1980. 201 pp.  
Per *Index Translationum*, [A12l](#) reprints appeared in 1984, 1987, 1991, 1992, and 1993. A note accompanying the 1992 *IT* entry describes it as the twenty-third printing.
- \*A12m *A fényképezésről: Tanulmány*. Trans. (Hungarian) Anna Nemes. Budapest: Európa Könyvkiadó, 1981. 239 pp.
- \*A12n *Ensaaios sobre fotografia*. Trans. (Port.) Joaquim Paiva. Rio de Janeiro: Editora Arbor, 1981. 198 pp.  
What we take to be a second printing of [A12n](#) appeared in 1983. Its CIP data repeat the [A12n](#) title, but the title page, inexplicably, reads *Ensaaios sobre a fotografia*.
- \*A12o *Om fotografi*. Trans. (Swed.) Boo Cassel. Stockholm: Norstedts, 1981.229pp.
- A12p *Sobre la fotografía*. Trans. (Span.) Carlos Gardini. Barcelona: Edhasa, 1981. 217 pp.

- \*A12q *Eseji o fotografiji*. Trans. (Serbo-Croat.) Filip Filipović. Belgrad: Radionica SIC, 1982. 211 pp.
- \*A12r *Sur la photographie*. Trans. (Fr.) Philippe Blanchard. Paris: Union générale d'éditions, 1983. 239 pp.
- \*A12s *Valokuvauksesta*. Trans. (Fin.) Kanerva Cederström and Pekka Virtanen. Helsinki: Love kirjat, 1984. 191 pp.
- \*A12t *Fotografi: Essays om billede og virkelighed*. Trans. (Dan.) Ole Vesterholt. Copenhagen: Fremad, 1985. 212 pp.
- A12u *Ensaaios sobre fotografia*. Trans. (Port.) José Afonso Furtado. Lisbon: Publicações Dom Quixote, 1986. 178 pp.
- A12v *O fotografii*. Trans. (Pol.) Sławomir Magala. Warsaw: Wydawnictwa Artystyczne i Filmowe, 1986. 200 pp.
- A12w *On Photography*. New York: Noonday; Toronto: Collins Publishers, 1989. 208 pp.  
Quotations from two more sources—*Paris Match* and the *Journal* of Edmond and Jules de Goncourt (the latter involving “the first sale of photographs” and predicting public worship of a photographed American god)—are added to the “Brief Anthology” (see p. 206).
- A12x *On Photography*. New York: Anchor, Doubleday, 1990. 208 pp.
- \*A12y *Über Fotografie*. Trans (Ger.) Mark W.Rien and Gertrud Baruch. Frankfurt am Main: Büchergilde Gutenberg, 1990. 194pp.
- \*A12z *Fotograf üzerine*. Trans. (Turkish) Reha Akcakaya. Istanbul: Altikirkbes, 1993.
- \*A12aa *Sur la photographie*. Trans. (Fr.) Philippe Blanchard. Paris: Christian Bourgeois, 1993. 239 pp.

A13 *Illness as Metaphor*. New York: FS&G; Toronto: McGraw-Hill Ryerson, 1978. 87 pp. See [A22](#), [E10](#).

An untitled introduction—two paragraphs figuring illness as a form of “onerous citizenship” while asserting the necessity to resist metaphoric thinking about illness—prefaces nine chapter-like sections.

“1” ([B58](#), [E26](#)). Compares tuberculosis and cancer. Like cancer, TB was “felt to be morally, if not literally, contagious”—until a cure was found. Hence the “Conventions of concealment” by which doctors avoided truth telling. Though TB and cancer are no more fatal than coronary disease, the former two have been understood as “obscene” in ways inexplicable merely by reference to a (modern) fear of dying.

“2” ([B58](#)). Notes the “overlap” of TB and cancer; both were associated with consumption and extrusion until medical advances distinguished the two,

allowing quite opposed associations (where “TB makes the body transparent,” cancer is typically “invisible”; where TB is associated with “exacerbated sexual desire,” cancer is “de-sexualizing”; where TB is a time disease, cancer is spatial). Such mythology persists, though the tubercle bacillus can settle elsewhere than the lungs, because it “fits” with preexisting imagery (the association of breath with life) that interprets TB and cancer as death itself.

“3” (B58). TB and cancer are both “understood as diseases of passion,” passion frustrated (TB) or repressed (cancer), though both pictures evoke the theme of “resignation” or passivity, the latter allowing TB sufferers to “express” sexual feelings while sublimating them, as if the disease were to blame.

“4” (B58). Takes *She Stoops to Conquer* as evidence that TB had become, by the mid-eighteenth century, a romanticized trope of worth and station, and by the nineteenth century a “new model for aristocratic looks,” a fashion that eventually became “the province of fashion as such,” as if the reality of the disease “was no match for important new ideas, particularly about individuality.” Thus is “the interesting” equated with romanticism, with modernism, and with (Nietzschean) powerlessness, with sadness and melancholy, with bohemianism and enforced leisure. Only the discovery of streptomycin in 1944 was enough to dispel the myth. Because cancer cannot be romanticized, insanity has become the modern sign “of a superior sensitivity.”

“5” (B59). TB, unlike some other diseases, “isolates” the individual from the community; with cancer, the isolation is less romantic than punitive. Where the syphilitic only “had the disease,” the “TB-prone character” was judged “likely to get it.” Where the ancients tended to see disease as “an instrument of divine wrath” directed at the entire community, modern disease stories romanticize and individualize, to the point where dying, especially of TB, led to virtuous self-revelations.

“6” (B59). Charts changes in the presumed relations of character and disease by reference to the Greeks, to Christianity, to philosophy. Where Christianity (and Kant) moralized the “fit” between victim and disease, as if disease were the sign of excess, Romantic and post-Romantic thinkers associate disease with expression, with “will,” so that the contrast “is no longer between moderate passions and excessive ones but between hidden passions and those which are brought into the open.” But where “The early Romantic sought superiority by desiring,” contemporary romanticism assumes the contrary, “that it is others who desire intensely.” Such antiheroic passivity creates “The ideal candidate” for cancer, a myth that is even more “moralistic and punitive” than its predecessors in that it weakens the patient’s understanding, hence the will to seek proper treatment.

“7” (B59). Contrasts romantic melancholy and Victorian correlations of cancer and hyperintensity with “consumer culture” correlations of cancer with depression or “alienation.” Sees psychological explanations of disease flourishing because they undermine the “reality” of illness, thus providing some “control” over the experience in the absence of religious convictions or a sense

of death as “natural” to living. Expanding “the category of illness as such” denies individual responsibility (as in describing crime as a disease) while simultaneously reaffirming it (sickness as a matter of “will”).

“8” (B60). Punitive and moralistic attributions typically accrue to diseases “whose causality is murky, and for which treatment is ineffectual.” The disease then becomes a metaphor that stigmatizes individual sufferers. Contrasts how syphilis, TB, and cancer have been used to think about the expenditure of energy: “The Victorian idea of TB as a disease of low energy (and heightened sensitivity) has its exact complement in the Reichian idea of cancer as a disease of unexpressed energy (and anesthetized feelings).” Where the connotations of TB urged sympathetic methods of treatment, the military figures associated with cancer (invasion, attack) lead to “avowedly brutal notions of treatment” (counterattack). An extension of the warfare trope figures cancer as a “cosmic disease,” a “science fiction scenario” of alien invaders. Where TB served a romantic view of the world, cancer appeals to the paranoid, as if cancer were “a distinctively ‘modern’ disease.”

“9” (B60). Where Elizabethan disease metaphors are relatively nonspecific, are used to judge society as out of balance, the “Master illness” metaphors of contemporary culture put at issue “health itself,” expressing “dissatisfaction with society as such.” Where Victorian TB patients sought health in rural climates, latter day usage sees the city itself as a cancer, as synonymous with the “repressive” or “unnatural.” Where Machiavelli, Hobbes, and Shaftesbury presume society is “in basically good health,” modern disease imagery—as in Revolutionary France, Nazi Germany—is “less lenient”; political diseases are less to be treated than attacked, punished. Though the cancer metaphor especially “seems hard to resist for those who wish to register indignation,” “modern disease metaphors are all cheap shots” that, moreover, are harmful to victims of real diseases. Argues (by contrasting cancer and gangrene) that the cancer metaphor will evolve and change “when the disease is finally understood”—to the point where it will be morally permissible, but of little use. “The cancer metaphor will be made obsolete...long before the problems it has reflected so persuasively will be resolved.”

\*A13a            *Krankheit als Metapher*. Trans. (Ger.) Karin Kersten and Caroline Neubaur. Munich: Hanser, 1978. 95 pp.

\*A13b            *Falske forestillinger om sygdomme: Fremkaldt af forkert sprogbrug*. Trans. (Dan.) Kirsten Jørgensen. Copenhagen: Gyldendal, 1979. 97 pp.

A13c            *Illness as Metaphor*. London: Allen Lane, 1979. 87 pp.

A13d            *Illness as Metaphor*. New York: Vintage; Toronto: Random House of Canada, 1979. 85 pp.

A13e            *La maladie comme métaphore*. Trans. (Fr.) Marie-France de Paloméra. Paris: Seuil, 1979. 105 pp.

- \*A13f *Malattia come metafora*. Trans. (Ital.) E.Capriolo. Torino: Einaudi, 1979. v+69 pp.
- \*A13g *Sykdom som metafor*. Trans. (Norw.) Grethe Schønning. Oslo: Gyldendal [Norsk Forlag], 1979. 80pp.
- \*A13h *Ha-mala kmetafora*. Trans. (Hebrew) Yehuda Landau. Tel-Aviv: Am Oved, 1980. 82 pp.
- \*A13i *La enfermedad y sus metáforas*. Trans. (Span.) Mario Muchnik. Barcelona: Muchnik Editores, 1980. 130pp.  
Various sources list 1981 and 1984 printings of [A13i](#).
- \*A13j *Ziekte als spookbeeld*. Trans. (Dutch) Gerard Grasman. Utrecht [and Antwerp]: Bruna, 1980. 87 pp.
- \*A13k *Krankheit als Metapher*. Trans. (Ger.) Karin Kersten and Caroline Neubaur. Frankfurt am Main: Fischer-Taschenbuch-Verlag, 1981. 103pp.  
*Index Translationum* lists [A13k](#) printings in 1987, 1989, 1992, and 1993.
- \*A13l *Sjukdom som metafor*. Trans. (Swed.) Britt Arenander. Stockholm: Bromberg, 1981. 127 pp.
- \*A13m *In'yu to shite no yamai*. Trans. (Jap.) Takao Tomiyama. Tokyo: Misuzu shobo, 1982. 157 pp.
- \*A13n *A betegség mint metafora*. Trans. (Hungarian) László Lugosi. Budapest: Európa Könyvkiadó, 1983. 102 pp.
- \*A13o *Bolest kao metafora*. Trans. (Serbo-Croat.) Zoran Minderović. Belgrade: Edicija Pecat, 1983. 171 pp.
- A13p *Illness as Metaphor*. London: Penguin, 1983. 90 pp.  
We have seen a 1988 reprint of this 1983 edition. The reprint provides a long list of other “Penguin Group” subsidiaries, implying that each marketed [A13p](#). The reprint also incorporates a change in section 9, which we only lately caught. When the change was introduced, or which [A13](#) translations are based on the revised text, we do not know (though see [B58f](#)). Part of the section’s first footnote, citing Frank Lloyd Wright, is incorporated into the text, replacing an [A13](#) passage quoted from Balzac.
- \*A13q *A doença como metáfora*. Trans. (Port.) Márcio Ramalho. Rio de Janeiro: Edições Graal, 1984. 108 pp.
- \*A13r *Bir metafor olarak hastalık*. Trans. (Turkish) Ismail Murat. Istanbul: Bilim/Felsefe/Sanat, 1988.
- A13s *Illness as Metaphor*. New York: FS&G; Toronto: Collins Publishers, 1988. 87pp.

A14 *I, etcetera*. New York: FSG; Toronto: McGraw-Hill Ryerson, 1978.246pp.

“Project for a Trip to China” (C4). “At the border between literature and knowledge, the soul’s orchestra breaks into a loud fugue. The traveler falters, trembles. Stutters.” So writes Sontag in section 12 of “Project,” and aptly so; this autobiographical rumination about going (not going) to China is profoundly musical, though after a serialist (or structuralist) fashion, a sequence of theme-and-variation permutations that quite defies summary, despite its segmentation into thirteen as-if precisely calculated sections. Bridges figure prominently in the fable’s iconography, as do various (pointedly) nameless voices. “Conception,” both intellectual and biological, is an overarching topic; so too is the relation of “M.” (evidently Sontag’s/the narrator’s mother) to *her* mother’s native country; so too the relation of fact to fiction, or to “truth”; so also the narrator’s relation to her (dead) father, her (invisible, if sometimes photographed) father’s (hence hers) to colonialism, to things Chinese (food, torture, politeness, quotations); the relation of her parents’ China to Mao’s, of past to future to present; of “ultimate refinements” to “ultimate simplifying,” hence to goodness and forgetting and “The problems of individuals...”; the relation of knowledge or truth to “Its privileged distortions, in philosophy and literature”; the relation of the mythical to the historical, hence to “the problems of literature...”; the relation of literature to words, to silence(s), to the overdeterminations of selfhood. “Literature, then. Literature before and after.... Perhaps I will write the book about my trip to China before I go.”

“Debriefing” (C5, E13). Another disjointed and (New Yorkishly) autobiographical first-person rumination on concepts of connection and contingency. Begins *in medias res* with a description of Julia, an as-if anorexic and agoraphobic friend given more to wondering than to acting. Despite the conviction that Julia’s unanswerable questions are crazy, the narrator both asserts and denies a connection with her (hence asserts and denies a connection to the reader/interrogator) by detailing her own agenda of puzzlements, each topic announced by a bold-face heading: *What Is Wrong* (the nausea of history, the pain of class, a cacophony of voice-prints, the stench of suffering, the burden of knowledge, the lack of it); *What People Are Trying to Do* (“striving to be ordinary,” “to be interested in the surface,” “not to mind,” to play, “to quit the life,” to economize, “answering ads that magicians and healers place in newspapers,” doing good deeds for friends, sending graffiti missives to Simone Weil); *What Relieves, Soothes, Helps* (sharing memories, saying no, “having the same feelings for a lifetime,” having different feelings altogether, a sense of humor, being paranoid, flight, guiltless sex); *What Is Upsetting* (voices lost and voices heard, desperation, ignorance, uncertainty, an inability to change, “an airless life”); *Our Prospects* (“Aleatoric. Repetitious”; “Not good”; a matter of flight or will or bravery; “more of the same” refused; ruthlessness and love; “forlorn demented bricklayers” helping each other in “routines of secular ethical charm”); *What I’m Doing* (leaving, returning, exhorting, dreaming, “not thinking,” groaning, wondering, “not giving up,” clinging to a Sisyphian rock). Many

characters reappear from one segment to another, thus miming the contingency and the layering of the narrator's "Veined" and "Writhing" grid-city: Doris I, II, and III, for example, or prodigious Lyle ("the Mozart of *Partisan Review*") and his lookalike doubles; a Black sorceress and a white one; an angry Yiddish journalist and his long-lived best friend; the narrator and the suicidal Julia.

"American Spirits" (C3). An allegorical account of a woman ("Miss Flatface") whose regularity of feature leads to a "career of vengery." Her story is told in twelve unnumbered segments, in most of which a pair (or more) of "American Spirits" whisper to her, "beckoning and forbidding."

(1) Inspired by Ben Franklin and Thomas Paine, Mrs. Jim Johnson, formerly Miss Flatface, lifts her skirts, tells her husband she's changed, and rides off with Mr. Obscenity to the sound of "moans and giggles."

(2) Contrasts Mrs. Johnson's reputation for clean garbage with the litter and body odors of Mr. Obscenity's summer quarters near the boardwalk; contrasts her foreign-movie expectations of immigrants with Mr. Obscenity's "swarthy" friends, who are given to "talk of Communism, free love, race mixing." Despite the table and sexual manners of his friends, Mr. Obscenity himself is clean and orderly. Mr. Obscenity offers Miss Flatface to his "black chum," known as Honest Abe. Abe is hesitant, but Miss Flatface, inspired by James Fenimore Cooper and Betsy Ross, is patriotic and dutiful.

(3) While "Mr. Obscenity continued to leaf, as it were, through her body," while inspired by the spirits of Henry Adams and Stephen Crane, Miss Flatface ponders whether "she still deserved her name," the source of Mr. Obscenity's power, the relationship between thought and pleasure.

(4) As if testing her imagination, Mr. Obscenity offers Miss Flatface a choice between expulsion and "an orgy with no holds barred." Inspired by the spirits of William James and Fatty Arbuckle, she decides to leave, feeling "terribly alone."

(5) Inspired by Edith Wharton and Ethel Rosenberg, Miss Flatface plots feminist revenge, only to have her picture taken by a trench-coated sociology student. Now convinced that Mr. Obscenity's place was not a "haven of spontaneous misrule" but an educational institution, Miss Flatface hastens to the basement boiler room to seize power. Finding a white-hooded technician before a bank of television screens, Miss Flatface undoes her housecoat, to attract and seduce. His "delicate" hand hesitates, then "lunged toward a dial."

(6) *Inspector Jug, Detective* tells an indignant Miss Laura Flatface that the other girls and the TV sets are staying, though she's "gotta go." "Ignoring the spirits of Eddie Duchin and John Philip Sousa," Miss Flatface offers wine, rock music, and herself; is interrupted by the arrival of her photographs and her gleeful relief that, though more assertive than before, her features "were not indecently protruding." The Inspector's inspection is cut short by a wrathful Mr. Obscenity in Dracula drag. Though the Inspector pleads his businesslike case, Mr. Obscenity sinks fangs into Jug's shoulder; Miss Flatface escapes while skirts drop and curses fly.

(7) Her apprenticeship behind her, Miss Flatface plies her trade, though “chided” by the spirits of William Jennings Bryan and Leland Stanford “when she didn’t get a good price.” Accosted by Mr. Obscenity outside a lumber-camp movie theater, Miss Flatface refuses his advances and truths and is saved by an opportunely toppled tree. Propositioned by Inspector Jug in Times Square to join him in the detective business, haunted by the spirits of John Brown and Dashiell Hammett, Miss Flatface sides with God and the Constitution in declaring it “a free country,” herself a free woman—though a lonely one, a loneliness relieved by a taste for tabloid disasters and a conviction “that she herself was perfectly normal-looking.” Though taking the occasional vacation from hustling and the opportunity “to know this country extremely well,” Miss Flatface “wouldn’t have changed her life for any other” because it “brought her a peace of mind and a vitality she’d never known before.” Encountering Mr. Obscenity and Inspector Jug together, she consigns them to the care of the Chicago police on a charge of sexual molestation.

(8) After five years and 174 encounters with her pursuers, Miss Flatface feels “condescension, touched with alarm.”

(9) Haunted by Warren G. Harding and John F. Kennedy, Miss Flatface falls in love “for the first time in her life.” Though Arthur looks like Jim, “he’s not Jim, said Miss Flatface to herself. Nor am I I.” Living in San Diego, eating canned foods cold, wearing loafers and white socks, Laura welcomes her sailor husband home from the sea by playing the tattoo game and forgetting “her former lives”—though not enough to venture out with Arthur for fear of Mr. Obscenity and Inspector Jug, a fear well-founded in view of two weirdoes Arthur encounters at the Blue Star bar. At a bus stop near her house, she confronts her tormentors and finds them laughable.

(10) Though warned by the spirits of Margaret Fuller and Errol Flynn, Miss Flatface eats a taco and falls mortally ill. “In a lucid interval between deliriums she called for a lawyer and dictated her will,” in which Arthur “wasn’t mentioned” because “In the end we all return to our beginnings.”

(11) “Miss Flatface’s Last Will and Testament,” as addressed to America and various American institutions, to her children, to her former husband, to Inspector Jug, to Mr. Obscenity.

(12) After Mr. Obscenity and Inspector Jug depart the Easy Come Easy Go Funeral Home in a huff at Arthur’s offer of a funerary ice-cream cone, Arthur and Jim Johnson share their (limited) knowledge and their grief while “Up in heaven” a well-loved Miss Flatface “watched approvingly.”

“The Dummy” (C1, E21). This first-person account (in three unnumbered segments) of the narrator’s paradoxical success at creating a cyborgian double raises doubts about his narrational status and sanity—as if the invisibility the dummy allows him, as a spy upon “himself,” were always already the case.

(1) Reports the decision (duplication, as opposed to suicidal extinction), its motivations (an “intolerable” situation, routines of work, marriage, family), its mechanism (Japanese plastic, electronic innards, painted facial features courtesy

“an important artist of the old realistic school”). Reports as well the dummy’s first day on the job (“What a hard life I led!”).

(2) Several months later, all is well—except the dummy is paying too much attention to “the new secretary, Miss Love.” Confronted one morning in the shower, the narrator runs water to cover the dummy’s sobs and explains why he can’t leave his wife. The dummy threatens self-destruction while the narrator ponders imaginary lives and his preference for solitude. After the dummy and Miss Love share “a hot embrace,” the narrator pleads for time to build the dummy a dummy—though he insists that “the true dummy” should “sit for the artist” this time, as if hoping to eliminate the inexplicable difference that sent the first dummy off course.

(3) Nine years later; both dummies are happy fathers with successful careers and satisfied wives. The narrator occasionally visits his “relatives” and congratulates himself on having solved “the problems of this one poor short life....”

“Old Complaints Revisited” (C8). “I want to leave, but I can’t” writes the loquacious but hesitant narrator of this Orwellian parable of a translator seeking to be free of “the organization” but stymied by the absurd “feeling that it’s a privilege to be a party to their error.” Though in the first of the story’s seven unnumbered segments the narrator seems to be addressing him/herself in the second person (“You’ll interrupt impatiently”), we are eventually assured (in segment 5) that “only members” have “in their hands” the photocopied document mailed to members “chosen at random.” The topic of “translation”—as between languages, concepts, genders; as between past and present, truth and legend, writers and readers, selves and others—is sustained throughout.

(1) “Each day I wake up and tell myself today I’ll write a letter.” This seems to be the day. But the consequences of resignation or departure loom large (“implacable faces and mutilated bodies”) as does the translator’s absurd belief in the unbelievable. The “organization” is described or defined—by reference to “the organizer” and his books, to the (debatable) origins and (unhappy) history of the organization, to its faults, its virtues: “What unites us is rather what we reject.” Reasons for joining are pondered (“For some, it is the number of distinguished writers...”; “the idea of being different”; maternal disapproval); the translator’s earliest encounters with members (Uncle George, Professor Cranston) are recalled. (The narrative is repeatedly punctuated by references to the world of the narrational present, barking dogs, noisy neighbors, etc.)

(2) Reasons “why it’s difficult” to leave (because even “treasonable acts” do not carry a “certainty” of expulsion); reasons for wanting to leave (isolation, a narrow urbanity, aversions to carnality, to vegetables, to “mental dullness”). Contradictory reproaches and “exotic” (or “pathetic”) projects. Permissions and maternal insults; another organization. “If only I could commit a crime, and be done with it.”

(3) The organization’s loosely hierarchical structure, its schismatic sects; its academies and courts; words as “ends in themselves.” Turtlenecks and

overcoats; city cold and tropical fantasies; natural beauty and moral emptiness. “The Translator Is on the Verge of Talking about Sex.” But *only* on the verge, for fear that specifying genders (spouse Lee’s, lover Nicky’s, the translator’s own) risks “losing the sense of my problem as a general one.” Nicky is (generally) described (a painter). Actions vs. judgments; others vs. selves; bodies vs. words.

(4) Accusations against the organization are advanced (“Of complicating my will”) and qualified (“I don’t deny that it has improved my mind”). Fear of exile, of being forced to leave, of *not* being forced. Perhaps “doubling” the offense, by getting another member to resign, will assure expulsion. A last visit with the organizer; temperance and “tea laced with whiskey.” The irrelevance of “private distress.” The secret of suffering; the curse of knowledge (“Deeper and deeper into the books”).

(5) “The Translator Reaches an Impasse” because “Only a member’s seconding of my own disenchantment will make sense” and because the translator is apprehensive at asking a local member; hence “this” photocopied document.

(6) Possible answers are anticipated and responded to, “perhaps” from (among others) Cranston, Uncle George (instructing the translator in political assassination), an old school friend whose situation and letter are “the mirror image” of the translator’s (“I want to return. But I can’t”). The “principle of contradiction” is alluded to (as discussed in the organizer’s “brilliant essay”) and embodied in the translator’s conviction that only the organizer’s desire to leave the organization will be reason enough for staying.

(7) “The Translator Indulges in Some Generalizations,” chiefly about language, to the effect that a writer is and is not identical to the language he/she uses (“My problem is identical with my language”; “But I disavow it. I’m more than my voice”). Caught, as between the expanse and constriction of language, with knowledge but no answers, the translator pleads anxiously for contact (“Speak to me! Answer me!”).

“Baby” (C7). In the fifteenth of this story’s twenty-two unnumbered segments, one of “Baby’s” parents, for the purpose of distinguishing between “crazy and not crazy,” tells a psychiatrist of the voices their son has been hearing when boarding the school bus; one says (roughly) sit on *this* side or die, while another (on days when *this* side is completely full) says “Today it doesn’t matter.” Obviously, yet intriguingly, “Baby” is nothing but a play of nameless and conflicted voices seeking solace and connection—but arranged in such a way as to make sequential summary all but impossible.

Two voices we never hear directly are the psychiatrist’s and Baby’s. Each segment is headed by a day of the week; for the first two weeks (assuming they are sequential), one parent comes Monday, Wednesday, and Friday, the other Tuesday, Thursday, and Saturday. In the third week, the sessions are “doubled”; there are two entries for Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday. In the subsequent Friday entry, one parent tells the doctor that they can no longer afford

double sessions; in the last entry, “Saturday,” a reference is made to the previous session, indicating that a kind of doubling continued, one parent having had two sessions in a row. Though we are led to believe that the sessions were *not* tape-recorded, they are presented as transcriptions, but only of the parent’s language, usually uttered as if in answer to the doctor’s questions. And “Baby’s” voice, to the extent we hear it at all, is always a matter of quotation or paraphrase.

The gender-ambiguity played up in “Debriefing” is continued, as is the autobiographical subtext. The degree of regularity implied by alternating appointments implies mother/father (or vice versa). But each voice uses plural pronouns (“we,” “our”); and the doubling-up in the third week, given uncertainty as to who comes first on a given day, makes it all the more impossible to determine which parent is which except by recourse to the most conventional gender expectations. Likewise, though the “baby” is male, many of the details of his life accord with Sontag’s childhood and adolescence: reading under the covers by flashlight, the chemistry set in the suburban southern California garage, being editor of the high school newspaper, etc.

As the story progresses, it becomes increasingly clear that the parents are losing touch with the reality of their (only) child; each contradicts the other, or him/herself, on various details, whether Baby is athletic or not, reads literature or not. Baby’s age shifts from moment to moment. Baby’s plot to poison his parents is eventually matched by their decision to dismember him. Most of the story’s final segment consists of an impassioned, embittered, desperately contradictory plea, shot through with summary references to 1960s popular culture, that the doctor tell Baby “he’s not going to live forever.” The anguish concludes with a question (“Oh God, doctor, why did our Baby have to die?”) that can be taken to turn the entire story inside out.

“Doctor Jekyll” (C6). The complexity of the twenty-four unnumbered segments of “Doctor Jekyll” resists sequential annotation. A given segment might link two spatially distant characters—usually Utterson and Jekyll—in a kind of “subjunctive” doubling (“It is possible that a line extends from the flattish back of Utterson’s head to Jekyll’s striped tie...”); more globally, “Doctor Jekyll” constantly evokes, typically by revising or updating, Stevenson’s *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*. Stevenson jumbles “story” via a fragmented “plot” that is refracted through the character of the lawyer Utterson, to whom various stories, testaments, letters, etc., are addressed. Sontag makes literal the sense in which Utterson is the story’s central figure—the one who gathers all the fable’s message-bearing “lines” together—by casting Utterson as the energetically clairvoyant (and vaguely Nietzschean) director of a Long Island “Institute for Deprogramming Potential Human Beings.” Lanyon is no longer a doctor but a lawyer; Enfield is no longer Utterson’s cousin but his wife’s. Danvers Carew is no longer a member of parliament but “a senior trade-book editor.” When an old man is killed in the street, it is not with a cane but a guitar case. Poole is no longer Jekyll’s butler but Utterson’s body servant. Women are far more present in Sontag’s version; Jekyll’s wife and sister, the “redheaded ex-go-go dancer”

for whom Hyde still carries a torch, “a much-acclaimed Lithuanian poet” who spent her last months at Utterson’s institute. Sontag also elaborates the homoerotic subtext only hinted at in Stevenson. While (in segment 12) Jekyll gazes tenderly at his wife, Utterson is instructing a “band of male pupils” in the use of a Turkish clay that eliminates body hair. When Jekyll, weary “of trying to tune his aching instrument of a self,” seeks out Hyde, his ex-patient, and suggests they go off together, the gyrating Hyde asks if Jekyll is “some kind of fruit.” Among other topics, “Doctor Jekyll” meditates on the relation between masculine identity and violence, in nearly Lacanian terms; just when Jekyll, weary of war news, gets the idea of sacking “the very fortress of identity” by switching bodies with Hyde, earning his “I” by disavowing it, he also ponders the Oedipal prospect of butting heads with Utterson in the hope “that Utterson’s head might crack open.” Though he tries to murder Hyde by whipping him with a bicycle chain—as if heeding a limping Hyde’s advice to commit a crime as a means to freedom—Jekyll is last seen in his prison cell receiving the news of Hyde’s suicide and of Utterson’s response (“everybody is free to do as he or she likes”).

“Unguided Tour” (C9). Comprises nine unnumbered segments featuring a number of (possible) voices, most of them echoing *other* voices among those collected in A14, if only in their postmodern intertextual circumstances. (See also E19.)

The primary voice is conflicted from the beginning—in the sense that traveling in search of (an implicitly timeless) beauty seems the antidote to an unsatisfactory love affair or marriage (“I took a trip to see the beautiful things”) despite the fact that the beautiful is also the ephemeral (“Whenever I travel, it’s always to say goodbye”), in the sense that changes in scenery only confirm the degree to which those within the scene are “unchanging.” A second voice continuously interrogates the first, repeatedly suggesting that he/she should have accompanied the female narrator instead of “him.” But an absence of quotation marks allows the possibility that the dialogue is really an internal one. Moreover, the entire text is “overwritten” via italicized headings that anticipate subsequent phrases, headings that are themselves repeated (*Omens*, *This spot*, *Object lessons*, *The past*, etc.) and that, by their presence, complicate any attempt to attribute particular lines. Also complicating matters are various passages quoted as if from guidebooks, avowedly read only *after* the trip was taken. Indeed, the tour is “unguided” in the sense that space is experienced as “Mannerist,” as “open” and “loose.” As is the narrator’s (sexual) body, to judge by the architectural tropes used to seduce a “comely waiter” in segment three.

Aptly enough, for a story where sexuality figures so largely as troping human transcendence, the guiding narrative thread is the story of Lot’s wife. Like the Israelites of Exodus, the narrator is guided through a (vaguely) Mediterranean wilderness by “an imagination like a pillar of fire.” But her heart is “like a pillar of salt,” as if she has already looked back out of love of the modern and militarized “necropolis.” Though she has (perhaps) licked a column in a seaside

Egyptian mosque in the hope of curing restlessness, the wish “To make this place another” abides, in the hope that “*Land’s end*” is not “*The end.*”

- A14a* *I, etcetera*. London: Victor Gollancz, 1979. 246 pp.
- A14b* *I, etcetera*. New York: Vintage, Random House; Toronto: Random House of Canada, 1979. 246 pp.
- \**A14c* *Ich, etcetera: Erzählungen*. Trans. (Ger.) Marianne Frisch. Munich: Hanser, 1979. 258 pp.
- \**A14d* *Io, eccetera*. Trans. (Ital.) Stefania Bertola. Torino: Einaudi, 1980. 249pp.
- \**A14e* *Jag, etc.* Trans. (Swed.) Harriet Alfons. Uppsala: Bromberg, 1980.327pp.
- \**A14f* *Watashi eto setora*. Trans. (Jap.) Akio Namekata. Tokyo: Shinchōsha, 1981. 274pp.
- \**A14g* *Ich, etcetera*. Trans. (Ger.) Marianne Frisch. Frankfurt am Main: Fischer-Taschenbuch-Verlag, 1982. 232 pp.
- A14h* *Moi, etcetera*. Trans. (Fr.) Marie-France de Paloméra. Paris: Seuil, 1983. 283 pp.
- \**A14i* *Yo, etcétera*. Trans. (Span.) Eduardo Goligorsky. Barcelona: Seix Barral, 1983. 278 pp.
- \**A14j* *Ik, etcetera*. Trans. (Dutch) J.J. de Wit. Weesp: Agathon, 1985. 323pp.
- \**A14k* *Ja, i tako dalje*. Trans. (Serbo-Croat.) Mladen Jovanovic. Nis: Gradina, 1985. 53pp.  
Listed by *Index Translationum* as derived from [A14](#).
- \**A14l* *Ben, vesaire*. Trans. (Turkish) Gökcin Taskin. Istanbul: Can Yayinlari, 1988.
- A14m* *I, etcetera*. New York: FSG; Toronto: Collins Publishers, 1988. 246pp.
- A14n* *I, etcetera*. New York: Anchor, Doubleday, 1991. 246 pp.

*A15* *Under the Sign of Saturn*. New York: FS&G; Toronto: McGraw-Hill Ryerson, 1980. 203 pp.

“On Paul Goodman” ([B42](#), [E17](#)). Focuses less “on” Goodman than on the relationships, temporal and spatial, simultaneously distanced and passionate, between Sontag and Goodman, between Europe (Paris, Sartre, Cocteau) and America (New York, Goodman, Sontag), with Goodman as the only “living American writer” to whom Sontag feels indebted. The essay’s first two (of five) unnumbered segments loop back in time from Sontag’s reading of Goodman’s death in the *Herald-Tribune* to her first encounters with Goodman to her subsequent avoidance of him, despite her abiding admiration of Goodman’s

“convincing, genuine, singular voice.” Segment 3 discusses the “mean American resentment toward a writer who tries to do many things,” to which Goodman, in his inspired and inspiring “amateurism,” was unjustly subjected, even after he became famous. Segment 4 specifies those qualities in Goodman that Sontag admires: “an intrepid feeling for what human life is about, a fastidiousness and breadth of moral passion.” Segment 5 returns to the Paris of segment 1, to the near bookless room of her own, where Sontag, seeking “to hear [her] own voice,” still discovers one of Goodman’s books buried within the pile of her own manuscripts.

“Approaching Artaud” (D22). Annotated at A11.

“Fascinating Fascism” (B50). Comprises two numbered sections.

(1) Describes Leni Riefenstahl’s *The Last of the Nuba* as a “First Exhibit”; contrasts the photos of Nuba tribesmen between the covers and those of Riefenstahl on the cover, the jacket copy with the book’s introduction; takes the whole as systematically misrepresenting Riefenstahl’s career—as actress (in Arnold Fanck “Alpine epics”), as director (of *The Blue Light*, of four [vs. two] Nazi-financed “documentaries”), as a female and newly “rehabilitated” advocate of (photographic) “beauty.” Avows *Last of the Nuba* is “continuous with [Riefenstahl’s] Nazi work,” is effectively the third (and last) panel of “her triptych of fascist visuals,” in that the Nuba are a death-worshipping “tribe of aesthetes” who evoke “some of the larger themes of Nazi ideology.” Takes Riefenstahl as the only “major artist” whose identification with Nazism is so complete as to be “instructive”; to study her is to study “fascist aesthetics.” Not limited to work produced under fascist regimes, “Fascist art glorifies surrender, it exalts mindlessness, it glamorizes death.” Compares fascist and communist art; both feature monumentality and “mass obeisance,” both feature “grandiose and rigid” patterns of movement, though Nazism is more emphatic in its appropriation of “the rhetoric of art—art in its late romantic phase,” thus advocating not “a Utopian morality” but “a Utopian aesthetics—that of physical perfection,” a perfection both “asexual” and “pornographic,” an “ideal eroticism” in which sexuality is “converted into the magnetism of leaders and the joy of followers” thus repressing sexuality per se (and women). Ponders the reactionary logic by which Nazi art is reappropriated as pop art, both its “formal beauty” and “political fervor...viewed as a form of aesthetic excess.” Takes contrasting receptions of Riefenstahl and Dziga Vertov as instancing a “double standard” that ignores the real and continuing appeals of fascist art, thus making it all the harder to “detect the fascist longings in our midst.” Advocates “historical perspective,” by contrast with camp irony and “formalist appreciations,” as antidote to corruptions of taste that follow from “absentminded acceptance of propaganda.”

(2) Describes *SS Regalia* as a “Second Exhibit,” as offering a “cruder, more efficient” instance of fascinating fascism, especially (via photographs of uniforms) fascism as “a particularly powerful and widespread sexual fantasy” that links violence with aesthetics and seems “impervious to deflation by irony.”

Wonders how the trappings of a sexually repressive ideology become sexualized (especially for gay men); adduces the trope of theatricality as a “natural link” between fascism and sadomasochism, each of which seeks a magnified, “savage experience.” But where the typical sadomasochist uses theater to “reenact or reevolve” an individual past so as to generate sexual energy, the “fad for Nazi regalia” in consumerist cultures seems to rehearse a denial of sexual choice, an attempt to escape “an unbearable degree of individuality” by enacting a socially shared “master scenario” in which “the aim is ecstasy” and “the fantasy is death.”

“Under the Sign of Saturn” (D24). Meditates via Walter Benjamin on the (suicidal) relation between determination (as in being born “under a sign”) and freedom achieved through an ironic duplication or “projection” of will or impulse. Comprises four unnumbered segments.

(1) Describes pictures or recollections of Benjamin that focus on the opaqueness of his gaze, its inwardness, or its direction *away* from the camera/viewer, thus asserting, as it were, his “thingness,” his “readability” as a kind of text, his world-directed extemporaneous words always “ready for print.” (Later Benjamin is quoted to the effect that his stubborn temperament yields a gaze “that appears to see not a third of what it takes in.” The gaze disassembles, reduces.)

(2) Benjamin’s modernist irony is evident in his choice of determinations, describing himself (and others) in astrological (rather than psychological) terms, as Saturnine, as melancholic; his isolation is a matter of (willed) self-positioning *within* (not apart from) the surreal modernist city, as the place where one can “lose one’s way,” or one’s self, though the city he haunts or inhabits is as much a metaphysical dreamscape, mapped out (projected) in imagination, as a brute reality; mapping both reduces the world and defines the realm of transgression, its “forbidden” zones of class and sex. Mapping also distances the world, reduces experience to memory, outer to inner, past to present; time (as in German *Trauerspiel*) becomes space, history becomes allegorical tableau. Yet multiple possibilities—levels of meaning, crossroads of mind—can also be a burden for the slow and indecisive; the knife that cuts through the labyrinth can easily be turned against the self.

(3) The Saturnine self is doubled, as text to be deciphered, as project (ever yet) to be completed. Benjamin codes himself (via anagrams, pseudonyms) to resist decipherment, yet also as (in his words) a “despondent surrender to an impenetrable conjunction of baleful constellations [that] seem to have taken on a massive, almost thing-like cast.” A world of “lifeless things” is most aptly read by those most thing-like. His most precious objects were books, readable things, traces, ruins, allegories; hence Benjamin’s fragmentary and idiosyncratic reading habits, hence as well his writerly habit of “being against interpretation wherever it is obvious.” Benjamin, moreover, had a special predilection for miniature objects, portable, reduced in meaning, enigmatic in their reduction (like photographs; “little worlds”). Things are tokens of death; reading their meaning

allegorizes the task of making life itself meaningful, a little world where one can go, get lost, or hide.

(4) Like other famous melancholics (Baudelaire), Benjamin becomes a “hero of will” through a compulsion or addiction to work, which confirms his solitude and determines the isolation and compression of his style, “as if each sentence had to say everything” for “dread of being stopped prematurely,” if only by the inhuman exertion of writing. Given modernity’s suicidal resistance to life and truth, the writer’s task “as scourge and destroyer” can thus become self-destructive. Only by maintaining an ironic and destructive solitude, by “reducing what exists to rubble” so that paths or “positions” remain open, can a “freelance intellectual” avoid entrapment, go “beyond” the will, and maintain the “balance” that sustains “the life of the mind” in a resolutely mindless age.

“Syberberg’s Hitler” (D25). Comprises (juxtaposes) seven unnumbered segments.

(1) In a world where “modernist tastes” have been “diffused on an undreamed-of scale” and stripped of heroic “claims as an adversary sensibility,” a daunting and discomfiting masterpiece like *Hitler, A Film from Germany* “seems a retrograde feat.”

(2) Syberberg’s romantically ambitious naïveté, conferring “an excruciating sense of possibility,” is matched by the modernist idea that cinema invites “speculation to take a self-reflexive turn.” Syberberg avoids the “passivity” of “realism” and the “pornography” of “documentary,” avoids “spectacle in the past tense,” by creating “spectacle in the present tense,” in “the theater of the mind.” This “subjectivity” is marked by the film’s “ghostly” or “posthumous” reliance on “cinéophile myths” and “hyperboles.” As Hitler “watched the war every night through newsreels,” so he too was a “moviemaker.”

(3) *Hitler, A Film from Germany* works phantasmagorically, drawing on “disparate stylistic sources: Wagner, Méliès, Brechtian distancing techniques, homosexual baroque, puppet theater.” In its “eclecticism” the film is surrealist, assuming “a broken or posthumous world,” working by “dismemberment and reaggregation” via inventorylike lists, via miniaturization, by “recycling of visual and aural quotations.” Thus is “the real” displaced by “the reel.” The one “aspect of Surrealist taste that is alien to Syberberg” is “the surrender to chance, to the arbitrary.” Everything in *Hitler, A Film from Germany* “is presented as having been already consumed by a mind.”

(4) In his *Hitler*, Syberberg undertakes the work of “mourning” by means of an emphatically German “moralized horror show.” Though the film “assumes familiarity” with “German history and culture,” though it “alludes to familiar genealogies, real and symbolic: from Romanticism to Hitler, from Wagner to Hitler, from Caligari to Hitler,” etc., its ironically anachronistic intermingling of past, present, and future, a view of “history as catastrophe,” suggests the “German tradition of regarding history eschatologically, as the history of the spirit.” Thus Syberberg follows Heine and Thomas Mann in evoking “a kind of Hitler-substance that outlives Hitler”; thus he follows Freud et al. by undertaking

the “obligation to grieve,” which effort accounts for the film’s exhaustingly repetitious and exaggerated style.

(5) Though Syberberg claims that “his work comes from ‘the duality Brecht/Wagner,’” the Wagnerian element dominates, especially as extended via the Symbolist movement. Where Wagner wanted an “ideal theater,” Syberberg is Wagnerian in wanting a cinema “which takes up where reality leaves off.” Yet where Wagner sought a grandiose and sublime “synthesis,” Syberberg not only invokes yet impiously profanes Wagner via his ironic “aggregation of seemingly disparate elements.”

(6) “Syberberg is the sort of [Symbolist] artist who wants to have it both—all—ways” via “contradiction” and “irony,” conferring “meaning in unlimited amounts” for the sake of “eclipsing” his ostensible subject, as if “he may have ‘defeated’ Hitler.” Thus a skeptical Syberberg “conducts his own rites of deconsecration” while simultaneously relishing “notions of innocence and pathos—the traditions of Romantic idealism.” In its combination of “nostalgia for utopia with dystopian fantasies and dread,” Syberberg’s *Hitler* film declares the kinship of cinema and science fiction, cinéphilie serving as a post-utopian’s last “lost paradise” in light of his own “Great Refusal” of “modern industrial civilization.”

(7) Though Syberberg’s Post-Romantic style of melancholy is “impersonal,” his *Hitler* film is “passionately voluble,” an “exercise in the art of empathy.” Syberberg is thus less Saturnine a melancholic than Benjamin, less inhibited and skeptical than Godard. In trying “to be everything,” *Hitler, A Film from Germany* “belongs in the category of noble masterpieces which ask for fealty and can compel it.”

“Remembering Barthes” (B63). Is, unusually, a single piece of continuous prose, as if the unity of Barthes’s life were the issue in light of his untimely death. Emphasizes Barthes’s early interest in the theatrical as indicating the “dramaturgical” sense of ideas that (belatedly) propelled him onto “the inbred French intellectual stage.” Hence the simultaneously “combative” and “celebratory” aspects of his essayistic temperament that, though modernist in practice (“irresponsible, playful, formalist”), was not especially modernist in its tastes. Describes Barthes’s “amorous relation to reality—and to writing, which for him were the same.” Fascinated by “mental classifications,” Barthes’s “work is an immensely complex enterprise of self-description.” After a trip to China in 1974, his “dislike for the moralistic became more overt,” as did his weariness of classificatory “systems.” In opening himself to risk, “He became his own Great Writer.” In his later years, “The dramaturgy of ideas yielded to the dramaturgy of feeling,” enrolling “the invention of sense in the search for pleasure.” Unworldly, sad, Barthes was “a great lover of life.” The pathos of his childlike agelessness is only “made more acute by his premature, mortifying death.”

“Mind as Passion” (B64). Comprises eight unnumbered segments.

(1) Evokes Canetti’s way of describing his own vocation in describing the writers he aspires to succeed or oppose. Like Hermann Broch, Canetti aspires to

originality, to longevity, to fervent insatiability. In “being challenged” by “an unattainable, humbling standard,” Canetti becomes “extremely self-involved in a characteristically impersonal way.”

(2) Describes Canetti’s “mental geography” in terms of “the exile writer’s” equation of language and place (“a place is a language”). Seen from the outside—as Mischa Fox in Murdoch’s *The Flight from the Enchanter*—the polymath writer is exotic. Seen from the inside, as in Canetti’s *Auto-da-Fé*, the “itinerant intellectual” is a “familiar” type: “a Jew, or like a Jew; polycultural, restless, misogynistic; a collector...; weighed down by books and buoyed up by the euphoria of knowledge.” The mad bookman of Canetti’s novel, driven to suicide by “the world in the head,” echoes Canetti’s heroic adolescent avidity for knowledge. Kein’s “immolating himself with his books” anticipates the more “prudent fantasies of disburdenment” of Canetti’s later writings.

(3) Canetti’s sensibility is hyperbolic, fascinated by the grotesque. His moralistic impatience with knowledge, with writing, is matched by his heroic insistence, as in taking twenty-five years to write *Crowds and Power*. In siding with “the humiliated and the powerless,” “Canetti advances the model of a mind always reacting, registering shocks and trying to outwit them.” The aphoristic style of his notebooks “is the perfect literary form for an eternal student.” Though the unsociable impudence of the notebook form “makes of thinking something light,” Canetti shows not “the slightest trace of the aesthete.” Rather, Canetti is “A dedicated enlightener” who seeks insistently to refute not only power but death itself.

(4) Admiration is, for Canetti, “a way of keeping someone alive.” *The Tongue Set Free* is dominated by the admired figure of Canetti’s mother, herself “the primal admirer” who “created a tense world, defined by loyalties and betrayals.” Despite her (admirable) cruelty, Canetti nobly “refuses the victim’s part.” From this “steadfast refusal of tragedy” comes “much of Canetti’s energy,” energy associated with language, which “was the medium of their passion.”

(5) Canetti’s stressing “the moralist’s organ, the ear” over the eye measures “his remoteness” from aestheticism. It is the voice that “stands for irrefutable presence.”

(6) In avowing a “poetics of political nightmare” Canetti turns “time (history) into space” via “eccentric classifications.” In granting to crowds a “biomorphic” autonomy Canetti insists “on an ahistorical understanding,” contra Marx and Hegel. Though not a Freudian, Canetti echoes Freud in seeing religion as the prototype of irrational (mass) behavior and politics as pathological and semiotic, as mental activity that “must be decoded.” Canetti’s “freedom from reductive habits of thinking” is evidence of his profoundly literal “conservatism.”

(7) The hope of “unifying everything in one head” requires “a permanent state of avidity” in which the body is “unreal.”

(8) “The message of the mind’s passion is passion.” But Canetti’s “last attribute of a great writer” is that he (like Broch and Goethe) teaches us “how to

breathe,” for which one must “go beyond avidity,” hence “beyond the gathering of power.”

- A15a* *Bajo el signo de Saturno*. Trans. (Span.) Juan Utrilla Trejo. Mexico, D.F.: Lasser Press Mexicana, 1981. 195 pp.
- \**A15b* *Im Zeichen des Saturn*. Trans. (Ger.) Werner Fuld et al. Munich: Hanser, 1981. 203 pp.
- \**A15c* *I Saturnus tecken*. Trans. (Swed.) Eva Liljegren. Stockholm: Bromberg, 1981. 218 pp.
- A15d* *Under the Sign of Saturn*. New York: Vintage, Random House; Toronto: Random House of Canada, 1981. 203 pp.
- \**A15e* *Dosei no shirushi no moto ni*. Trans. (Jap.) Takao Tomiyama. Tokyo: Sho□bunsha, 1982. 240pp.  
*Index Translationum* lists this as *Dosei no shirushi no shitani* and as published in 1983.
- \**A15f* *Sotto il segno di Saturno*. Trans. (Ital.) Stefania Bertola. Turin: Giulio Einaudi Editore, 1982. 165 pp.
- \**A15g* *Im Zeichen des Saturn*. Trans. (Ger.) Werner Fuld et al. Frankfurt am Main: Fischer-Taschenbuch-Verlag, 1983. 204 pp.
- \**A15h* *Under the Sign of Saturn*. London: Writers & Readers, 1983. 204pp.
- \**A15i* *In het teken van Saturnus*. Trans. (Dutch) David Brisk. Weesp: Uitgeverij Villa, 1984. 267 pp.
- A15j* *Sous le signe de Saturne*. Trans. (Fr.) Philippe Blanchard et al. Paris: Seuil, 1985. 183 pp.  
“Approaching Artaud,” already published in French (see [A11a](#)), is replaced in [A15j](#) by “Thinking Against Oneself: Reflections on Cioran” ([D19](#)). Moreover, though comprising seven chapters, like the original, the [A15j](#) chapter order is also different; the first and last chapters (on Goodman and, here, Barthes) are set apart, as before and after, while the numbered chapters are arranged as follows (per the English titles): (1) “Under the Sign of Saturn,” (2) “Thinking Against Oneself,” (3) “Fascinating Fascism,” (4) “Syberberg’s Hitler,” and (5) “Mind as Passion.”
- \**A15k* *Sob o signo de Saturno*. Trans. (Port.) Ana Maria Capovilla and Albino Poli, Jr. Porto Alegre, Brazil: L&PM Editores, 1986. 152pp.  
*Index Translationum* lists [A15k](#) as a “second edition.” Neither we nor Sontag can confirm the existence of a corresponding

“first.” WorldCat lists a 1980 printing of this, though that data may derive from the A15 copyright.

- \*A15l *Bajo el signo de Saturno*. Trans. (Span.) Juan Utrilla Trejo. Barcelona: Edhasa, 1987. 226 pp.
- A15m *Under the Sign of Saturn*. New York: Noonday; Toronto: Collins Publishers, 1989. 203 pp.
- A15n *Under the Sign of Saturn*. New York: Anchor, Doubleday, 1991. 203pp.

A16 *Tanken som lidelse: Essä om Elias Canetti*. Trans. (Swed.) Caj Lundgren. Stockholm: Brombergs, 1981. 32 pp.

Translates “Mind as Passion” (B64, annotated at A15). The cover (vs. the title page) reads: *Tanken som lidelse: En essä om Elias Canetti: Nobelpristagare 1981*.

A17 *A Barthes Reader*. Edited by Susan Sontag. New York: Hill & Wang; Toronto: McGraw-Hill Ryerson, 1982. xxxviii+495 pp.

“Writing Itself: On Roland Barthes” (D28). Comprises six unnumbered segments.

(1) Takes “writing itself to be Barthes’s “great subject,” as in his emphasis on journal-writing as an “instrument in the career of consciousness,” in his “singular, and self-referring” voice, which marks his “literary career” as a greater achievement than his “academic” one.

(2) Takes the “dazzling inventiveness” of Barthes’s “irrepressibly aphoristic” style as an intellectual imperative—to have, as if posthumously, “the last word.” In its “method of condensed assertion by means of symmetrically counterposed terms, the maxim or aphorism inevitably displays the symmetries and complementarities of situations or ideas.” Openly subjective and amateurish, Barthes’s “formalist temperament” seeks “something new and unfamiliar to praise,” or to praise “a familiar work differently”— as in his analyses of Michelet, Sade, Fourier. Takes Barthes’s “adversary notion of the ‘text’” as a formalist device for suspending “conventional evaluations” and “established classifications,” “an enterprise of avoidance” and “good taste” that reconstitutes “not the ‘message’ of a work but only its ‘system.’”

(3) Analyzes Barthes’s categorical rhetoric. His “most elementary” trope is the “paradoxical” aphorism, in which “anything could be split either into itself and its opposite, or into two versions of itself.” Though many of Barthes’s classifications are “standard, such as semiology’s canonical triad of signified, signifier, and sign,” many are ad hoc, excessive, designed to initiate arguments and “to keep matters open—to reserve a place for the uncodified.” Avows Barthes “preferred short forms,” especially “miniature ones, like the haiku and the quotation”; his *Michelet*, *S/Z*, and *Roland Barthes* trace “itineraries” of topics or quotations in lieu of “unified arguments.” In this, “Barthes is a particularly inventive practitioner” of the rhetoric of refusal, of “anti-linear forms of

narration.” Emphasizing the performative aspect of writing, Barthes blurs “the line between autobiography and fiction,” and “between essay and fiction as well.” Conventional demarcations and punctuation are sometimes abolished; sometimes texts are fragmented, into serial or note form, using numbers, headings. And the more emphatically performative, personal, then the more pleasurable, the more “festive.”

(4) Adduces Barthes’s essays on writers, especially Flaubert, Gide, and Sartre, as confirming his fascination with “writing itself.” Though Flaubert’s “agony of style” exemplifies the writer as hero and martyr, Barthes follows Gide in asserting “an avid, guileful relation to ideas that excludes fanaticism,” a writerly generosity that is “also properly egotistical” and “willing to be minor.” Though conceding much “to Sartre’s view of literature and language,” Barthes invokes “the morality of form” rather than Sartre’s “morality of ends,” which conceives of literature as “communication,” “position-taking.” Though taking for granted the modernist imperative of the “radical” or “adversary stance,” Barthes insists on “desire” and “appetite,” on a subversive voluptuousness, a practice of writing that is “excessive, playful, intricate, subtle, sensuous,” antithetical to power. He thus lacks Walter Benjamin’s “tragic” relation to politics; instead, he sees politics “as a kind of constriction of the human (and intellectual) subject which has to be outwitted.”

(5) To defend “the plurality of desire” Barthes refracts everything through the “master category” of language, in the “widest” or “most inclusive” form, “meaning form itself,” the empty or ecstatic “zero degree” sign. To take everything as “discourse” is both to defer and to proliferate meanings. Though a dandy in the French tradition, Barthes saw in Japan “an aesthete’s utopia,” “a less defensive, more innocent, and far more elaborated version of the aesthete sensibility.” Where an older form of Western dandyism involves willful exclusions of taste, elegance as refusal, another form, to which Barthes “was more inclined,” “sustains standards that make it possible to be pleased with the largest number of things.” Though Barthes criticizes “fixed antitheses” of good and evil, surface and depth, he eschews Nietzsche’s distrust of seduction and spectacle, of theatrical surfaces; the theatrical, for Barthes, “is the domain of liberty,” “where meaning itself may be refused.” Thus Barthes, though a “perpetual disciple,” avoids tragic finality by voiding works and doctrines, finally even language itself, of content, of power, in “a politics of radical individuality.” “The aesthete’s radicalism” has it “both ways,” accumulating identifications while fleeing them in acts of disburdenment.

(6) Though his last books are “artfully anti-confessional,” his “commitment to impersonality” is “only another variation on the project of self-examination: the noblest project of French literature.” Where *Roland Barthes* and *A Lover’s Discourse* are finally Platonic in their “prophetic” joining of the thinker and the lover, *Camera Lucida*, in its emphasis on the photographic as “the warmest kind of realism,” provides Barthes a release “from the exactions of formalist taste.” In seeking to dismantle himself, Barthes brings the aesthete view to the point of

self-destruction: “what follows is either silence—or becoming something else.” As in his last works he did.

“Note.” Acknowledges that Barthes was not consulted in selecting the essays and excerpts reprinted in *A Barthes Reader* and offers “some afterthoughts” and “rueful commendations” regarding material *not* included in the collection.

- A17a*            *A Barthes Reader*. Edited by Susan Sontag. London: Jonathan Cape, 1982. xxxviii+495 pp.
- A17b*            *L'écriture même: A propos de Barthes*. Trans. (Fr.) Philippe Blanchard and Susan Sontag. Paris: Christian Bourgois Éditeur, 1982. 62 pp.  
A book-format translation of [D28](#).
- A17c*            *Barthes: Selected Writings*. Edited by Susan Sontag. London: Fontana/Collins, 1983. xxxviii+495 pp.
- \**A17d*           *Al-kitaba bid-datbi-saad Barthes*. Trans. (Arab.) Mohammed Souirti. Casablanca: Afrique-Orient, 1987. 54 pp.  
A book-format translation of [D28](#).
- A17e*            *A Barthes Reader*. Edited by Susan Sontag. New York: Noonday; Toronto: McGraw-Hill Ryerson, 1988. xxxviii +495 pp.
- A17f*            *A Barthes Reader*. Edited by Susan Sontag. London: Vintage, 1993. xxxviii+495 pp.  
The spine and the cover carry the title *A Roland Barthes Reader*, though the title page reads as cited.

*A18 A Susan Sontag Reader*. Introduction by Elizabeth Hardwick. New York: FSG; Toronto: McGraw-Hill Ryerson, 1982. xv+446 pp.

Organized, via the contents table, as follows:

“Introduction,” by Elizabeth Hardwick; annotated at [H97](#).

“From *The Benefactor*.” Chapters 1–8; annotated at [A1](#).

“From *Against Interpretation*.” “Simone Weil,” “Against Interpretation,” “Notes on Camp” (sic), “Spiritual Style in the Films of Robert Bresson,” and “On Style”; annotated at [A2](#).

“From *Death Kit*.” Roughly the last half of the book’s last segment; annotated at [A3](#).

“From *Styles of Radical Will*.” “The Aesthetics of Silence,” “The Pornographic Imagination,” “Godard”; annotated at [A5](#).

“From *I, etcetera*.” “Project for a Trip to China,” “Debriefing”; annotated at [A14](#).

“From *Under the Sign of Saturn*.” “Fascinating Fascism”; annotated at [A15](#).

“The *Salmagundi* Interview” ([F23](#)). Prompted to reconsider her positive appraisal of Riefenstahl’s formal appropriation of “content” in *Triumph of the Will* and *Olympia* in light of “Fascinating Fascism,” Sontag urges “continuity” if

also development in her views of “the richness of the form-content distinction.” Compares “fascist aesthetics” to “communist aesthetics”; where the latter turns “every institution into a school,” the former makes “the whole society into a theater.” Urges a “denser notion of historical context” as antidote to “generalizing either the aesthete’s or the moralist’s view of the world.” Responds to Adrienne Rich (K62) by advocating varieties of feminist criticism, as against “demands for intellectual simplicity, advanced in the name of ethical solidarity.” Prompted to consider Bergman’s “‘negative’ images of women,” or his implicit conservatism, Sontag avers that harsh judgments of Bergman “invert” the “slack” aesthetic standards “that prevail in much of feminist criticism” and that reproaching (conservative) art is like reproaching “consciousness itself,” which is perforce consciousness of the past. Observes how the political demand to start from tabula rasa scratch mimes the dispose-all logic of modern consumerism. Asked to comment on Philip Rieff’s critique of intellectuals who advocate “mass” art, Sontag declares the elite vs. mass culture distinction “unusable.” Asked about the relation of camp and feminism, Sontag praises camp’s “ironizing about the sexes” while remarking that “Notes on ‘Camp’” started as “Notes on ‘Morbidity.’” Prompted to consider *Story of O* as a feminist “allegory” of sexual oppression, Sontag praises the novel’s “candor about the demonic side of sexual fantasy.” Confronted with Philip Rieff’s definition of the “great teacher” as possessing inward “authority,” Sontag responds by declaring heresy as equally important to learning. Asked about connections among the totalitarian, the pornographic, and the apocalyptic imaginations, Sontag dwells on differences: of erotic from political life, of the skeptical, complicating intelligence from “the Good Dream of eternal barbarism.”

“From *On Photography*.” “The Image-World”; annotated at A12.

“From *I, etcetera*.” “Unguided Tour”; annotated at A14.

“From *Under the Sign of Saturn*.” “Under the Sign of Saturn,” “Syberberg’s Hitler”; annotated at A15.

“Writing Itself: On Roland Barthes”; annotated at A17.

A18a            *A Susan Sontag Reader*. Introduction by Elizabeth Hardwick. Harmondsworth, UK: Penguin, 1983. xv+446 pp.

A18b            *A Susan Sontag Reader*. Introduction by Elizabeth Hardwick. New York: Vintage, Random House; Toronto: Random House of Canada, 1983. xv+446 pp.

A19 *Camp: Nijinsky, Hitler, Sexfilme, Rosenkavalier, Jugendstillampen, David Bowie, Caravaggio, De Gaule, Greta Garbo, Jesus, Oscar Wilde, Rokokokirchen —und mehr!* Edited by Armin Kratzert. Munich: Popa Verlag, 1987.

Though “edited by Armin Kratzert, with an essay by Susan Sontag,” A19 amounts to an illustrated, book-length version of B11 (annotated at A2). The translation is by Mark W.Rien (see B11c and A2e); the (mostly photographic)

illustrations, the publisher acknowledges, were “not authorized” by Sontag. Kratzert provides a nine-paragraph afterword (see [K189](#)).

*A20 AIDS och dess metaforer*. Trans. (Swed.) Berit Skogsberg. Stockholm: Bromberg, 1988. 110pp. See [A22](#).

Though published “by arrangement” with FS&G, [A20](#) (like [B88](#)) saw print in advance of the English-language original. A one sentence prologue is followed by eight sections.

“1” ([B88](#)). Avows the inevitable contingency of metaphor (and interpretation) by analysis of “body” and “body politic” figures, among them the notion of illness as (ideological) invasion. Recalls anger, as a cancer patient, at the way military metaphors victimize the already suffering. Discusses changing attitudes toward cancer, brought about because another malady has become “the most feared disease.”

“2.” Though not an illness proper, AIDS is an “occasion for the metaphorizing of illness.” Like cancer, AIDS is discussed in military terms; like syphilis, AIDS is “a clinical construction,” a time-disease characterized by “stages” as opposed to the “geographical” spread of cancer. Unlike syphilis (and insanity), “no compensatory mythology” of “heightened” mental or emotional powers has developed for AIDS “because its association with death is too powerful.”

“3.” Like other sexually transmitted diseases, AIDS enforces a distinction between its “putative carriers” and “the general population,” a distinction rendered vehement because AIDS connotes “certain death” and is seen as punishment for deviant sexuality. AIDS, a syndrome rather than a single illness, is a product of “construction.” Though temporal figures (“stages”) allow for ambiguity as to outcomes, their appropriation to botanical metaphors (“full-blown”) prematurely suggests the inevitability of death, leading to a morbid solitude reminiscent of the “premodern experience of illness.”

“4.” Though some diseases allow “soft” outcomes, it is “suffering that degrades” that produces (metaphorical) terror. Neither heart disease nor polio is as metaphorically “repulsive” because neither damages or deforms the face, which is culturally “superior” to the body. Before germ theory, illness was associated with urban “miasma,” garbage, a “surplus” causality seemingly necessary to moralizing disease. Though psychological explanations of disease are akin to “miasma theory,” AIDS has not yet been psychologized, seems “a throwback to premodern diseases like leprosy and syphilis.”

“5” ([B88](#)). “AIDS has banalized cancer” in being understood as a “plague.” As “invasion” or “pollution,” plague is typically associated with territorial conquest and with things foreign or inferior. Thus AIDS illustrates “the classic script for plague” in being (Eurocentrically) associated with tropical climes, races, and animals. Because twentieth-century moralizing about disease increasingly takes the form of “judgments on the individual” (rather than society), only diseases “transmitted sexually” (vs. cholera, influenza) are likely to be thought of as plagues. The tendency to moralize disease is also seen in the

(antihistorical) habit of describing (social) disorder in disease terms, as in Čapek and Camus.

“6” (B88). Analyzes the “rhetorical opportunity” provided by a lethal venereal disease, not only to those “who claim to speak for God” but also to those “secular” authoritarians whose denunciations of “the gay plague” serve to condemn “contemporary permissiveness of all kinds”—as in neoconservative attacks on “the 1960s.” The plague metaphor both raises the stakes (by making AIDS a total threat) and stigmatizes its victims (as threatening “others”). Though AIDS is a metaphorical “marker of both individual and social vulnerabilities,” certain uses (e.g., “as a political metaphor for internal enemies”) have not developed because the “metaphoric potential” of AIDS differs from cancer’s; as a “slow-acting viral infection,” AIDS allows for genetic mutation. Though “the fears AIDS represents are old, its status” as “an entirely new disease” augments its potential for dread.

“7” (B88a). Though probably *not* a new disease, AIDS has challenged the triumphal picture of medicine and returned the prospect of (dire) consequences to sexual acts. Sex, for a time the realm of presentness, of isolated couples, is now redefined as a social and temporal chain, a new form of (trope for) fearfulness. Though campaigns for safe sex acknowledge perforce “the ineradicable variousness” of sexual expression, their “larger meaning” is still one of “the consciousness of risk.” Describes the sexual “innocence” of the 1970s as symptomatic of capitalism in its equation of liberty and “personal fulfillment.” Sees the caution inspired by AIDS as answering to larger cultural needs, an “exhaustion” of “purely secular ideals” associated with “enlightened modernity,” though this return to sexual and aesthetic “conventions” will likely increase “other kinds of appetites” (for drugs, for machines).

“8” (B88a). Though quarantine is unlikely to stop the spread of AIDS, the recurrent assurances that “the general population” is safe effect a quarantine, by defining “us” as heterosexual, as white. AIDS is a “world event” because the apocalyptic rhetoric it allows has specific (historical) appeal to “Western” societies, defining them as exceptional, which amounts to “an imaginative complicity in disaster.” The “slow motion” character of catastrophe “haunts” human thinking, as a photograph haunts reality, by “doubling” it via the (often statistical) “projection” of “imminent” disasters. Such projections (like goods, people) circulate globally, making AIDS “one of the dystopian harbingers of the global village.” Until AIDS becomes treatable, much “depends on the struggle for rhetorical ownership of the illness.” Totalizing illness-as-warfare and body-politic metaphors “have to be exposed, criticized, belabored, used up” lest they contribute to “the excommunicating and stigmatizing of the ill.”

*A20a*

*AIDS and Its Metaphors*. London: Allen Lane, Penguin Press, 1989. 95 pp.

- A British edition of [A20](#), though likely derived from [A20b](#). (Unless otherwise noted, all subsequent reprints or translations have [A20b](#) as their base text.)
- [A20b](#) *AIDS and Its Metaphors*. New York: FS&G; Toronto: Collins Publishers, 1989. 95 pp. See [E29](#), [E30](#).  
Clearly the English-language original of which [A20](#) is a translation (and to which all citations in the [A20](#) annotation refer). The last footnote of the [A20b](#) Chapter 5 is missing from [A20](#), as is a single sentence from [A20b](#) Chapter 3. All other differences are translation-specific (here vs. USA).
- \*[A20c](#) *Aids en zijn beeldspraken*. Trans. (Dutch) A.Daalder-Neukircher. Baarn: Anthos, 1989. 110 pp.
- [A20d](#) *AIDS e suas metáforas*. Trans. (Port.) Paolo Henriques Britto. São Paulo: Companhia das Letras, 1989. 111 pp.
- \*[A20e](#) *AIDS og dens metaforer*. Trans. (Dan.) John Theodor Thomsen. Århus: Klim, 1989. 100pp.
- \*[A20f](#) *Aids und seine Metaphern*. Trans. (Ger.) Holger Fliessbach. Munich: Hanser, 1989. 100pp.
- [A20g](#) *El SIDA y sus metáforas*. Trans. (Span.) Mario Muchnik. Barcelona: Muchnik [Editores], 1989. 103 pp.
- \*[A20h](#) *L'aids e le sue metafore*. Trans. (Ital.) Carmen Novella. Turin: Einaudi, 1989. 96 pp.
- [A20i](#) *Le sida et ses métaphores*. Trans. (Fr.) Brice Matthieussent. Paris: Christian Bourgeois [Éditeur], 1989. 123pp.
- \*[A20j](#) *AIDS and Its Metaphors*. Harmondsworth, UK: Penguin, 1990. 96pp.
- \*[A20k](#) *Az AIDS és metaforái*. Trans. (Hungarian) Zsuzsa Rakovzky. Budapest: Európa Könyvkiadó, 1990.
- \*[A20l](#) *Eizu to sono in'yu*. Trans. (Jap.) Takao Tomiyama. Tokyo: Misuzu shobo, 1990. 152pp.

[A21](#) *Geist als Leidenschaft: Ausgewählte Essays zur modernen Kunst und Kultur*. Trans. (Ger.) Gertrud Baruch, Werner Fuld, Mark W. Rien. Edited and with an Afterword by Eva Manske. Leipzig: Gustav Kiepenheuer Verlag, 1989. 297 pp.

Though the title of this volume (“Mind as Passion: Selected Essays on Modern Art and Culture”) derives from Sontag’s [A15](#) essay on Elias Canetti, the Canetti piece is *not* included in this portmanteau German Democratic Republic compilation, under license granted by Carl Hanser Verlag, of essays from [A2](#), [A5](#), [A12](#), and [A15](#). They are (using their English-language titles): “Against Interpretation,” “On Style,” “Notes on ‘Camp,’” “One Culture and the New

Sensibility,” “Happenings: An Art of Radical Juxtaposition,” “Theatre and Film,” “Reflections on *The Deputy*,” “The Pornographic Imagination,” “The Imagination of Disaster,” “Melancholy Objects,” “The Heroism of Vision,” and “Under the Sign of Saturn.” Eva Manske’s Afterword is annotated at [H149](#).

A22 *Illness as Metaphor and AIDS and Its Metaphors*. New York: Anchor, Doubleday, 1990. 183 pp. See [A13](#), [A20](#).

- \*A22a *Illness as Metaphor and AIDS and Its Metaphors*. London: Penguin, 1991. 180pp.
- \*A20b *Sairaus vertauskuvana Aids ja sen vertauskuvat*. Trans. (Fin.) Osmo Saarinen. Helsinki: Love-kirjat, 1991.
- \*A22c *In'yu to shite no yamai eizu to sono in'yu*. Trans. (Jap.) Takao Tomiyama. Tokyo: Misuzu shobō, 1992. 304 pp.
- \*A22d *Malattia come metafora, Aids e cancro*. Trans. (Ital.) Ettore Capriolo and Carmen Novella. Turin: Einaudi Contemporanea, 1992.
- \*A22e *La maladie comme métaphore et Le sida et ses métaphores*. Trans. (Fr.) Marie-France de Paloméra and Brice Matthieussent. Paris: Christian Bourgois Éditeur, 1993. 235pp.
- \*A22f *Ziekte als metafoor; AIDS en zijn metaforen*. Trans. (Dutch) Gerard Grasman and A.Daalder-Neukircher. Baarn: Anthos, 1993. 218 pp.

A23 *Tradities van het nieuwe of: Moeten wij modern zijn?* Trans. (Dutch) René Kurpershoek. Amsterdam: Uitgeverij Bert Bakker, 1990.49pp.

“Traditions of the New, or; Must we be modern?” was delivered as the Huizinga-lecture in Leiden, the Netherlands, in December 1989. (The annotation below is more than usually approximate due to temporal and linguistic constraints.) Comprises six unnumbered segments.

(1) Adduces Lovejoy on cultural terminology in describing “the modern” as the opposite of “the natural”; adduces Rimbaud on modernity’s status as an imperative. Describes the “metaterms” of modernity—speech, society, history, God, nature—as polarized. Sees modernity as originating in the French and American Revolutions, the romantic movement in art and literature, and the spread of new technologies (railroads, photography) and practices (mass tourism).

(2) Discusses the practice of “decade-speak”—“The Gay Nineties,” “The Roaring Twenties”—while noting its retrospective aspect, each decade defining itself by reference to its predecessor, the 1960s versus the 1950s, etc.

(3) Asks about the meaning and consequences of decade-talk, in view of the fact that time-talk in general is culturally or ideologically constructed (e.g., the contrast of the Christian and Japanese calendars). Discusses linear and cyclical

concepts of time. Ponders the enlightenment rationale for speaking in terms of centuries, in terms of (quantifying, universalizing) *numbers*—the eighteenth century, the nineteenth century, etc. Links “century-talk” to modernity, via Balzac, Musset, via the etymological link between “century” and “secular” (e.g., in Emerson). Adduces Nietzsche and Dostoyevsky on the dialectical relations between centuries, as a predecessor (the eighteenth) to overcome or exceed, as a successor (the twentieth) that will overcome in turn. Ponders the need for a smaller time unit (*viz.*, “the generation”) given Western cultural imperialism with its “advanced technology and unlimited distribution of consumer goods.” Sees twentieth-century thinkers as treating the “generation” as the motor of historical change, a temporal unit (or fiction) born of traumatic communal experiences—as in the Spanish “generation of ’98,” or the “lost generation”—though generation-talk continues to employ numbers and evokes exclusivist, in that sense conservative, implications, by “personifying” change, thus evoking a cycle of vigor and exhaustion. Sees generation-talk as renouncing the rationality and progressivism of century-talk in favor of “spontaneity” or irrationality, though its radicalism of sentiment effectively empowers the very order it opposes, hence the link between modernity and fascism.

(4) Takes “modernism” as a fiction or model for understanding change elaborated via concepts of century, generation, and decade. Sees generation-talk as implying activity, for evoking projects undertaken or experienced in common; sees decade-talk as implying passivity, a matter of being formed by change, by “trends, modes, illusions—in short: style,” as if one were less a subject than an object. Links this passivity with the post-political televisual culture of the United States and Europe. Notes the quantitative aspect of decade-talk, as if a person’s age were most determining or significant, as if decades have or give character.

(5) Sees decade-talk as symptomatic of the decadence of (inherent in) the modernist project, via its promises of emancipation and mobility. Observes the ethical power of modernity, as authorizing criticisms of racism and sexism, in eventually undermining Soviet-style social conservatism, while acknowledging as well its as-if unstoppable destructive (“suicidal”) force. Takes the fashion for postmodernism, as derived chiefly from architecture, as a hypertrophic eclecticism not derived from the logic of modernism, because it encourages people to do what they want, without regard for standards or limitations, à la consumerism.

(6) Closes by reference to Johan Huizinga’s *The Autumn of the Middle Ages* and *Homo Ludens*, both of which, in departing from the model of nonlinear change implicit in “the traditional,” evoke the value and danger of modernity. Ponders the apparent unlikelihood that consciousness of eternity will hold out against consumerist decade-think, while remarking that the coming decade will launch us into a new (less hopeful?) millennium.

A24 *Pellegrinaggio: Il mio incontro con Thomas Mann*. Trans. (Ital.) Martino Marazzi. Milan: *Leggere*, Rosellina Archinto, 1990. 31pp.

A pamphlet edition of “Pilgrimage” (B86) published as a supplement to *Leggere* No. 21 (May). Both A24 and B86 have ten unnumbered segments, though segments 5 and 6 of B 86 equate with A24 segment 5 and B86 segment 7 becomes A24 segments 6 and 7. We use the B86 scheme below.

(1) Describes “Everything” surrounding her December 1947 meeting with Thomas Mann as colored by shame, elaborated by figures of imprisonment (“doing time” in childhood) and retrospective irony (though “drowning” in cultural and familial “drivel,” she assumed that her “casing of affability was being accepted at face value”). Provided by her mother’s remarriage with “a door of [her] own,” the teenage Sontag becomes ever more “a demon reader,” “promiscuous,” to the point of occasional book-napping. Describes her (mostly musically precocious) “best friends,” especially Merrill.

(2) Because “Reading and listening to music” were “triumphs of not being [her]self,” Sontag took as inevitable that her admirations were for people dead or from distant (European) places. Where her musical god was Stravinsky, her literary god was Thomas Mann, as revealed in *The Magic Mountain* (“a transforming book, a source of discoveries and recognitions”) and its “Goody Two-Shoes” main character, Hans Castorp. Merrill suggests visiting Mann.

(3) Encountering Mann seems even less conceivable than an encounter with Ingrid Bergman or Gary Cooper. Mann “was a book.” “Why would I want to meet him?”

(4) While a cowardly Sontag seeks refuge, Merrill makes a date with Mann for Sunday afternoon tea.

(5) A miserable Sontag goes along with the plan in the hope of heading off “the more callow of Merrill’s remarks,” as if Mann “could be injured by Merrill’s stupidity” (or hers). Merrill and Susan try to rehearse their remarks but find it “Impossible to imagine” how a god like Mann would respond. Shown into Mann’s study, Sontag is shocked that Mann, despite his frailty, “so resembled the formally posed” frontispiece photograph of *Essays of Three Decades*.

(6) The trio discuss Wagner, translation, Mann’s new book; struck by Mann’s slowness of speech and his library, ashamed of having underestimated Merrill (and herself), Sontag is surprised that Mann isn’t “harder to understand,” is relieved when Mann declares *The Magic Mountain* his greatest novel.

(7) Tea served, Mann turns the conversation to his guests, their studies [A24 segment 7 starts] and their tastes in literature (Hemingway?); Sontag is discomfited that he wants them to be “representative” young Americans.

(8) Though “ashamed, depressed,” and unable (now) to remember details of their departure, Sontag agrees with Merrill that they “hadn’t made total fools” of themselves.

(9) Contrasts the relative failure of Mann’s *Doctor Faustus* with the success of her own post-graduation plans to attend the University of Chicago. Ponders how “Admirations set [her] free” from “childhood’s asphyxiations,” and embarrassment too, “which is the price of acutely experienced admiration.” Ponders as well her still-childish “sense of plenitude.”

(10) Concludes the story by declaring it a never-revealed secret, “As if it happened between two other people.”

A25 *Alice im Bett: Stück in acht Szenen*. Trans. (Ger.) Wolfgang Weins. Frankfurt: Verlag der Autoren, 1991. 66 pp.

Like A20, A25 appeared in translation before it was published in English. (Citations below derive from the A25b text.) An introductory note is followed by eight brief scenes. The play thus recalls, in its intertextual compression, “A Parsifal” (C14); passages of Wagner’s music for *Parsifal* are called for in *Alice*’s stage directions, and Wagner’s world-weary Kundry appears in scene 5, in a role also indebted to Lewis Carroll’s sleepy Dormouse—as if Alice James, sister to William and Henry (“Harry” in the play), were a female Amfortas, sexually wounded and (eagerly) waiting to die. The play’s tone is eerily retrospective. Harry quotes to Alice from a letter he will write two years after her death; likewise, most of the play’s questions lack question marks (“May I kill myself Father”)—as if the answers were (always) already available.

“Einführung.” Cites Virginia Woolf’s evocation of Shakespeare’s sister to ponder the way in which the “inner authority” necessary for artistic creation clashes with traditionally female accomplishments. Takes “naming” as troping language in general, equally potent and arbitrary, as evidenced in the way the historical Alice James (truly the sister of a famous writer or two) and Lewis Carroll’s fictional Alice are alike in their nightmare perception of the world around them. Though declaring that “the victories of the imagination are not enough,” Sontag’s descriptions of scenes five through seven evoke the literary models for her characters and describe the play’s genesis in dreams and drama and female anger.

A cast list designates four groups: primary characters (Alice, Harry, Nurse, Young Man), “Vision of Family,” “At the Tea Party,” and “Mattress Team.” The setting is London, 1890, except for scene 3, set in Cambridge, Massachusetts.

“1. Szene.” In the dark, the Nurse and Alice: “can” Alice get up or “won’t” she.

“2. Szene.” Atop a mattress stack atop Alice, the Nurse urges Alice to get up, not to tempt fate, to wear rouge; Alice wants to sit up; the mattress team is called. Vanity, murderous thoughts, an injection.

“3. Szene.” In her father’s study, Alice ponders suicide. Father urges her to use her “keen mind”; Alice prepares to brain him. He tells her a secret (that nothing matters); Alice is surprised. A leg, a light, a swing. She awaits his answer in the dark. As a bodiless father, then as mother, he says no, then (in a dress) asks that Alice “Do it gently.”

“4. Szene.” Harry visits Alice; intelligence vs. “the real world”; illness as suppressing “the lament of equality”; suicide vs. cancer; a shattered lamp; optimism vs. shadows. Harry administers laudanum; Alice asks about opium. Eloquence vs. resignation; the anxiety of quotation; man thoughts vs. woman thoughts; Harry vs. Father; wanting self-respect; who comforts whom.

“5. Szene.” Enter Emily Dickinson to Margaret Fuller and a sleepy Kundry; deference vs. intimidation. While Emily retrieves some (needful) flowers, Alice (newly delivered) and Margaret discuss the latter’s water-heavy death, the twoness of self-consciousness (“I am betraying myself”); opium in lieu of tea, advice from women vs. advice from men; feeling more or less, excitement vs. calm; Alice’s voyage recounted. Who invited whom; tea or no tea; life lines vs. death lines; the ghost of Alice’s mother, Alice saved by Kundry (“At this table there’s no room”); what Alice’s younger brother said; Margaret on seeing Rome. Enter Myrtha, to music from *Giselle*; lying down vs. getting up; terrible visions and (gender) contested wantings; reasons for waking vs. reasons for sleeping; shame and its burdens; brothers and frogs; helplessness and revolt; advice vs. consolation; smallness and disappointment. “Just a few more minutes.”

“6. Szene.” Alice “sees” Rome in her mind; it’s “everything” she imagines (“But then I am only imagining”). How to leave Rome; how to be alone. A story Harry told. Superstitions old and new; the hinge of time; ugly time vs. nostalgia time (“and the mind is the past, and the mind is Rome”); vantage points and panoramas; what you can see, what you can’t; gardens of stone, a stony lump, letters of stone; language (Latin) and memory; misprision and translation; a troubling spectral urchin with “his twisted blackened little thumb.” Outdoors vs. indoors. Ages and sizes. “One size fits all.”

“7. Szene.” “Take the mirror” says Alice to the incredulous Young Man she finds burglarizing her night-dark bedroom. Harry looks in; Alice feigns otherworldliness and says nothing of the intruder; questions of age and of gender. Saying she can’t, Alice gets out of bed. Filching his gin-flask, Alice knows Tommy-Tom’s name. Taking the bed vs. taking to it; bedbugs and class consciousness. Thoughts odd and terrible; the trap of self and the world outside; questions of humanity and friendship. Horrid energies and a larger world.

“8. Szene.” Alice and Nurse discuss getting up, growing up; discuss story telling and story ending, realness and difference, sleeping and waking.

\*A25a                    *Alice a letto*. Trans. (Ital.) Dauide Tortorella. Milan: Leonardo Mondadori Editore, 1991.

A25b                    *Alice in Bed: A Play in Eight Scenes*. New York: FSG; HarperCollinsCanada, 1993. 117pp. See [G114](#).

[A25b](#) differs from [A25](#) only slightly. Its cast list shifts Henry to “Visions of family”; the “Einführung” becomes “A Note on the Play” and appears, absent two paragraphs addressing the intertextual anxiety of German readers, at the end of the volume; a brief exchange between Alice and Young Man (regarding Alice’s drinking habits) is dropped from scene 7; [A25b](#) has even fewer question marks than [A25](#).

\*A26 *Sanatci: Ornek bir cilekes*. Trans. (Turkish) Yurdanur Salman, Muge Gursoy, Zafer Aracagok. Istanbul: MY [Metis Yayinlari], 1991.

This pirate edition includes, per Sontag, the following essays: “The Artist as Exemplary Sufferer” (from which derives the Turkish title), “On Style,” “Camus’ *Notebooks*,” “The Literary Criticism of Georg Lukács,” “Against Interpretation,” “The Aesthetics of Silence,” “Under the Sign of Saturn,” “Remembering Barthes,” and “Mind as Passion.”

A27 *The Way We Live Now*. Susan Sontag and Howard Hodgkin. London: Jonathan Cape, 1991. 30 pp. See [E29](#), [E36](#).

(A private, limited edition of [A27](#), with original and hand-painted etchings, was published in London, by Karsten Schubert Ltd., in 1991.)

[C12](#), published in book form, illustrated with abstract “Pictures” and “Endpapers” by Howard Hodgkin. (Hodgkin’s programmatic titles appear in italics below.) Sontag’s text appears in fifteen unnumbered segments, each a single past-tense third-person paragraph that takes on a present-tense aura, partly due to an interweaving of voices and attributory tag-lines (“he felt only a little ill, Max said to Ellen”), as if the omniscient narrator were overhearing a single ongoing conversation among members of a seemingly ever-present (if also waxing and waning) group, partly because the voices are interwoven via complex sentence structures of embedded clauses and phrases that delay or minimize the use of end-stop periods. The aura of presentness or totality is confirmed when it dawns that the story has twenty-six named characters—apart from the unnamed central figure who has fallen prey to an unnamed disease—one name for each character in the English alphabet. Because this complexity can hardly be mimed in summary, the segmentation below emphasizes such *aide-mémoire* features as can be pried loose from the story.

*Fear gives everything its hue, its high*

(1) Though “At first he was just losing weight” and delayed seeing a doctor, he did quit smoking. Though morbidly excited (“like what people felt in London during the Blitz”) his friends (and “he” as well) debate the wisdom of being tested.

(2) His friends offer alternative interpretations of his response to hospitalization; Quentin and Kate discuss alternatives to flowers (chocolate, licorice, jelly beans).

(3) The circumstances (“it wasn’t like the old days”) and politics of hospital visits are recounted and discussed; Aileen and her jealousy (“...if there could have been a woman”), his relationship with Nora.

(4) Doctors and hope; false hope and true; chicken soup vs. penicillin. The (woman) doctor “was optimistic about the possibility of getting him into the protocol.”

(5) "...but did Lewis really not know until yesterday." Though Lewis seemed worried, people are always worried (that's "the way we live now"). House keys and room keys; art, consolation, and the "retrospective mode."

(6) Weary of visitors and keeping a diary; "remorseful assessments"; self-admonitions. *in touch/checking in* The diary as a relic someday "safe inside the drawer."

(7) Possible side effects and worst-case scenarios; the ill, the well, and the cowardly.

(8) Home from the hospital, keeping in shape, diets and timing, visualization and too much chocolate.

(9) Three weeks later, accepted into the new drug protocol. Names and diseases; London vs. New York; the "utopia of friendship" vs. the "great chain" of sexuality; women, men, and a question of difference.

(10) Jockeying for his favor; Quentin vs. *as you'd been wont—wantonly/wantonly/eros past* Aileen; his Christmas Eve phone call to Nora.

(11) Gaining weight, looking better, better than what, looking not worse; Frank's Crisis Center client.

(12) At home *the hospital room was choked with flowers/everybody likes flowers/surplus flowers/the room...was filling up with flowers* though also "up and about." Deaths in Houston and Paris; to tell him or not; the value of life or lives cut short; "the way he had lived until now"; sex talk with "big sister" Kate; sex vs. cigarettes; "you just have to be unlucky once."

(13) What he talks about, what they talk about, what they don't talk with him about (Max); forms of the disease; old feuds return; taking friends for granted; the list and who keeps it; "he fell down yesterday on the way to the bathroom."

(14) Sleeping at home vs. in the hospital; the power of fear, the high of calamity; bleeding gums and his "white chocolate" pallor; friends who weep, friends who don't; acrimony gives way to hospital routine; his mother from Mississippi; his eyes and theirs; room decorations and *but he did stop smoking/he didn't miss cigarettes at all* the latest gossip; the story of Saint Sebastian; pestilence and arrows; death and television.

(15) Angerless detachment and the probability of going home ("if all went well"); Tanya peeks at the diary's deteriorating script; Ursula and Quentin discuss the temporalities of art forms. "He's still alive."

*Fear gives everything its hue, its high*

\*A27a                    *So leben wir jetzt.* Trans. (Ger.) Karin Graf. Zurich: Parkett/ Der Alltagg, 1991.

A27b                    *The Way We Live Now.* Susan Sontag and Howard Hodgkin. New York: Noonday, FS&G; Canada: Harper Collins Canada, 1991. 30 pp.

A28 *The Volcano Lover: A Romance*. New York: FSG; Harper-Collins Canada, 1992. 419 pp.

Comprises a prologue and four parts, three of which have numbered chapters. Shifts of time and vantage emphasize the pensive omniscience of the novel's (hovering) narrative voice, even in the monologues of parts 3 and 4. Most every chapter of A28 comprises a number of short segments, a feature the following summary can, at best, only approximate.

“Prologue” (E38). Comprises three unnumbered segments.

(1) “Manhattan, spring of 1992,” a narrator in “jeans and silk blouse” ponders “Why enter?” a flea market, ponders passions and fancies, looking and wandering, anywhere and here: “Desire leads me. I tell myself what I want to hear.” (2) “London, autumn of 1772,” an “older man” and a “younger” ponder the fact that the elder's *Venus Disarming Cupid* (“Thought wrongly to be by Correggio”) has not sold at auction. (3) Ponders the “human” terms used to describe volcanoes (“mouth,” “lip”), their quasi-human properties (“both male and female”); differences in perspective, spectators who watch or explore a volcano vs. villagers who flee; different historical moments (“March 19, 1944”), different views of catastrophe.

“Part One.” Each part of A28 is announced with a full page illustration drawn (mostly) from Sir William Hamilton's *Campi Phlegraei: Observations on the Volcanos of the Two Sicilies*. Each chapter begins with a smaller illustration from the same source.

“1.” As his nephew paces a courtyard, the Cavaliere's wife, her maid, their servants, then the Cavaliere himself, prepare to depart London for Naples at the end of his first home leave after seven years as envoy to “the kingdom of cinders.” The Cavaliere's London sojourn is briefly recounted, the sale of his Etruscan vases, the non-sale of *Venus Disarming Cupid*, his considerate feelings for his wife, hers for him, the desire to look, the desire not to, Voltaire's *Candide* and monkey lovers.

“2” (G119, G121). Elaborates the Cavaliere's enthusiasms, for collecting, Naples, his wife; the expatriate's view of Naples—a mountain of food and shirt-hidden knives; the virility of collecting, wife Catherine's revulsion and the king's food-slinging antics. Describes the Cavaliere's “plutonian” passion, exhibiting the volcano. “Collections unite. Collections isolate.” The Cavaliere's lava collection vs. young Charles's precious stones, Pliny the Elder vs. Pliny the Younger. Ascending the volcano (then vs. now), fear at the crater's edge, the inorganic and the melancholic, dance vs. gravity. (See also G124).

“3.” “The King is on the toilet”; a dutiful Cavaliere reiterates the story of a chocolate mountain, ponders “human reactions to the disgusting.” As the realm's “real ruler” is his Hapsburg wife, “King Big Nose” indulges his legendarily sensual passions, a world of “ungovernable” odors. The Cavaliere tells a courtier's stories: of a dead fiancée, a mock funeral, “the royal groin”; a night at the opera, hot macaroni; the King finally marries, a mountain of food, scramble and slaughter, a queen is revolted, “progress even here.” How “sheer odiousness”

dwindles in the telling. A (French) tale of animation, of a (female) statue brought to life by a (male) pedagogue who awards only the sense of smell, enough to yield a sense of time, “the pain of loss,” the desire to collect.

“4.” Christmas balls, animal massacres, liquefied saint’s blood, “an audience with the famous sibyl Efrosina Pumo”; though “Feeling superior” to the local superstitions, the Cavaliere is “yet not averse to the prospect of being surprised”; curiosity, age vs. youth, “a lidless box of thick milky glass,” “the struggle against knowledge,” reassurance vs. fright, past (mother) vs. future, the sibyl’s future vs. the volcano’s: “The future is a hole, Efrosina murmured. When you fall in it, you cannot be sure how far you will go”; the gift of Bartolomeo. The perspectivism of collectors and explorers; (orchestral) “Fantasies of omnipotence.” The Cavaliere as “the secret client” of Efrosina. Reading the Tarot, imagining colors and odors, interpretation vs. invention, the Cavaliere dissembles; the Cavaliere draws “four consecutive cards in the same suit,” all members of the Cup (or Vase) family, one a youthful and knavish relative he does not recognize; then “The Fool.” Another time, a trance, milky white walls, a terrible future.

“5.” de Sade in Naples, the Cavaliere in London, 1776; Catherine’s asthma worsens. The Cavaliere’s epistolary habits, “Letters to encourage letters,” letters and requests received, news of Wedgwood’s “Etruria Ware.” The distractions of money, “The sweet doom of the collector.” The promiscuity of collecting. The dramaturgy, the need “for surfeit.” The Cavaliere in his study. In his treasure vault; collecting as thievery. Appetites and memory. Having everything—as self-denial. The Cavaliere in his mirrored observatory. In his sitting room. On the mountain with Bartolomeo, “the democracy of nature,” the cruelty of aristocracy. The monkey arrives; “The Cavaliere laughed.” “The littlest citizen.” Cruelty and a chewed-through rope; lessons in mimicry and torment. The eruption of 1779. de Sade’s volcano. Bartolomeo walks on molten lava and saves the Cavaliere. Theaters close and churches open; a village family: “They died of fear.”

“6” (E38, G122, G125). The arrival in Naples of “The Knave of Cups,” the Cavaliere’s second cousin, William Beckford, fellow collector and author, “soul mate and shadow son” for Catherine; *The Sorrows of Young Werther* as test; mutual revelations (his “vague longings,” her musical compositions); the Cavaliere is “cast in the role of the one who does not understand.” His tenor, her piano; his passion for boys. “What released them to love each other was that each was unsatisfactorily in love with someone else.” Consummation vs. elevation; “perfect vibratory accord”; excursions and metaphors, awakening to beauty, unhappy love stories: Vesuvius and Capri. “It is the woman, of course, who loses.” William leaves and writes letters; Catherine’s decline, Jack the monkey’s too; William’s new book, Catherine’s annihilation and abandonment; death by quotation: “Even she might use the word dream now.”

“7.” Anatomizes Catherine’s illness (symptoms, diagnosis, etc.); her “excruciating abjection”; her visit to a Sicilian murderess, manners vs. atrocities.

Intimacy vs. “repressed rage.” A “nightmare of being interred alive”; Catherine’s breathless letter to the Cavaliere; the doctor’s death, then Catherine’s. Talking of his deceased wife, the Cavaliere “talked about himself; misanthropy, detachment, stoicism, “self-forgiveness”; wanting “not to change,” changing (aging) nonetheless. “Surfeited, his appetite for surfeit.” Viewing earthquake victims. Climbing the mountain, an “emblem” of “wholesale death,” of “human persistence” as well; layers of artifacts, mineral existence. Visions of catastrophe, “double urbanicide”; changing “standards of ruin.” A hermit, a philosopher, a “boiling crater.” A “ration of apocalypse.” “Any pit is an abyss, if properly labeled.”

“Part Two.” Another image of an erupting Vesuvius, again with onlookers in the foreground.

“1.” Mourning, melancholy, and worldly distractions; Jones’s paintings of emptiness, “moments of slippage”; the Cavaliere returns to England with Catherine’s body and a Roman vase, “the most valuable item that would ever pass through his hands”; negotiations with the Duchess of Portland; the Cavaliere and his nephew’s “close friend,” a village girl turned “nymph of health” and artist’s model; courting a rich heiress, hoping to prevent his uncle from remarrying, Charles sends the girl and her mother to Naples, after the Cavaliere’s return; Emma rejects his advances; his esteem increases. Her “abject” letters to Charles; she threatens to marry his uncle. Metaphysics of description, of beauty and its authority; watching her bathe, “cataloguing the play of her moods.” Beauty “without a chorus”? “And beauty can be taught how best to exhibit itself.” The compatibility of passion and possession; Emma displaces the volcano. Wedgwood replicates the “Portland” vase. “The great collectors are not women, any more than are the great joke-tellers.” Pitching vs. catching.

“2” (G122). The (monstrous) mountain, in long shot, from close up; a courageous poet (Goethe) and a cowardly painter (Tischbein) near the cone; “a prudent retreat”; views of the Cavaliere’s collections. The Cavaliere as Pygmalion, Emma’s euphoric performance. “A living slide show.” Stories “ancient” and moments “right.” “Illustrate the passion.” Femininity as change, as victimization, as theatrical triumph. Ancient attitudes and pop quizzes. Models and artists; Emma talks to Goethe; Lotte vs. Werther; art as rebirth; Goethe and the Cavaliere; “Primal” plants vs. English gardens; the poet as forgivable liar. Animate statues: female consolation vs. male revenge; an alien party goer with “better standards”; “Lighten up, stony guest!” Everyone an amateur collector; de Sade vs. Goethe; tombs vs. roses; contradiction and productivity. Understanding vs. acknowledging, drawing and annotation, a Genoese priest and a philosopher from Prague, a plan to “decapitate” Vesuvius, the (weakening) claims of royalty.

“3.” A freakish winter, catastrophe foretold. “Like a volcano erupting”; harbingers vs. human acts. The French Revolution; history and/or nature?; revolutions vs. ruins. A “lady in training,” “not sensitive to irony”; spheres of activity, unfolding talents. Vigée-Lebrun paints Emma, a model, not a subject; Ariadne at Naxos, Theseus vs. Dionysus; victimage vs. expressiveness; more

tableaux (Sabine women, Medea, Niobe). Revolution, exaggeration, a small party: the seducer and the bore, Count\*\*\* vs. Sir\*\*\*, right things and wrong; Emma tells a story, hostage-holding banditti vs. the Cavaliere, as if she'd been there, the King's good heart, "an astounding story"; the Cavaliere anxiously reflects ("It seemed like an act of love"). The trustworthiness of artists, of patrons. Home leave and visits: hers to a daughter (soon sacrificed), his to Walpole, hers to Romney (the painter); Emma sketched as Joan of Arc; self-control vs. a lack thereof; revolutionary theses: on inheritance, divorce, slavery; Emma (a subject, not a model) is painted as *The Ambassador*; a marriage is concluded; shunned by relatives, a relative is shunned; a message for Marie Antoinette. Naples, 1793—the Cavaliere's "world was a theatre of felicity," his wife "at the center, unifying it"; desire vs. collecting; twinned talents and friendships, his with the King, hers with the Queen; defamatory (Jacobin) rumors about Emma and the Queen. The Queen dreams her sister's death by guillotine; royal despondencies and musical cures; a "wonder-working castrato"; God, England, and Naples vs. France. Revolutionists plot, Vesuvius erupts; self-mutilation or abolition; the collector as destruction's accomplice, as self-destroyer.

"4." Upon delivering diplomatic dispatches to Naples, "He" is marked by the Cavaliere as England's "bravest hero," a star, like the Cavaliere's wife, who succeeds where her husband fails in securing a pledge of Neapolitan troops; body parts lost, letters written; elements of the war world, news of victory on the Nile. A "left-handed hero" returns; bran-tub gallantry and deck-crew cowardice; a legacy of fame ("He saw himself in history paintings"); the ministrations and questions of the Cavaliere's wife; phantom arms and phantom dreams. Truth large, truth inferior; admiration vs. intimidation. Dreaming of a banquet. A birthday party like a boyhood fantasy, a tributary column. The anxiety of the collector; the Cavaliere makes a list, an inventory, spiritual exercise, "the desire to know"; "Let the vases go to England." A trio of letter writers; missives to the hero's brother and wife, to Charles, the Foreign office; the trio in the Great Drawing Room; on the terrace. The appropriateness of appearance; "it didn't matter to *them*." Naples allied with England; "raising the martial spirits of the Queen." The army marches for Rome; the hero sails for Leghorn and reads a note; jealousy and love. France declares war; republicans vs. royalists. Packing to leave; the burden of collecting. Deception and departure; the King, his hounds, his admiral; stormy passage to Sicily. The weight and smell of fear; the consolation of spirits and pistols. His wife attends the Queen; Stromboli and Vulcano; Christmas dinner with the hero; a prince dies; the anchor drops; a more than ghostly trio watches the King's arrival in his second capital.

"5" (E38, G120). "Four modes of disaster"; the Cavaliere's vases are sunk. Living in Palermo, "the south of south." English exiles and large suppers; cards and gossip; allies (syphilis, Cardinal Ruffo, the British fleet) and enemies (anyone with "unpowdered hair" or a volume of Voltaire); reading as "amusement—not incitement." Skeptics and lovers; modes of accumulation and annihilation. Stares

and strong emotion; understanding vs. acting: "In fact, they had not yet even kissed"; warriors and women; plans for blockade. "Ambition and the desire to please"; Emma's "doubled desire" and unstinting "cravings"; gambling and touching; the mindfulness of bodies, of spaces; the hero toasts a lady; the Cavaliere explains "the scientific basis of mirages." Emma's abandon and vulgarity; her garrulousness, his flattery; "an extraordinary chorus of scorn and spitefulness." The "singularity" of a madman's villa; "the late prince's guardian spirits"; "a lady with a horse's head"; erudition, mutants, and love; "freakish beings" and "freakish—objects"; the dementia of collecting; a mirrored salon and inhospitable furnishings; the Cavaliere gone, "the children" blissfully kiss. A prince's chapel; "inconsolable fear"; terminal avidity. The Cavaliere mourns his lost vases, "impatient to discharge his [posthumous] rage"; the hero's departure; "distance and separation." The passing of lust, the embarrassment of bodies, eternal love; lucidity and (self) deception; "a famous cuckold"; the hero's displeased superiors; Emma dreams—of widowhood. The Cavaliere's anger and insomnia; feelings and bodies; "equals in pleasure, because equals in love"; simultaneity; news from Naples.

"6." "Baron Vitellio Scarpia was an exceptionally cruel man" who agreed with the Queen "that every aristocrat was probably harboring revolutionary sympathies"; execution vs. imprisonment; poets, professors—"But the people had other ideas." Passionate aggression vs. collection, revolution vs. the weighty past. What the baron saw; a duke, a mad uncle, and a Neapolitan mob; a body, a bonfire, a scream. A man in black, a razor, blood. Reports of the duke's demise; "Even the Cavaliere's wife flinched." The French take Naples; Scarpia awaits arrest and ponders "the gullibility of the benevolent"; Religion vs. faith; fake proclamations. "Such a revolution doesn't have a chance"; moderates vs. radicals; dearth and disorder; the French withdraw; Ruffo's peasants vs. ("tattooed") Jacobin patriots; varieties of torment; a "river of tears," "something like nature," stripping the palace. The hero sails to Naples for order's sake, Emma his translator, the Cavaliere his reluctant accomplice; the exemplary hero and a "treacherous" cardinal, an admiral's court-martial; war vs. punishment, murder and paperwork. "Distance distances"; the King's arrival and a "water-flayed" penitent. History as a passenger boat, the Cavaliere as an impotent traveler, a failed intervention. The flagship as a theater, of glory, of sexual identities and diversions. Summoned to Minorca, the hero refuses. Picturing death, becoming an image. Painters vs. viewers; significance then. Significance now. Kinds of calm; here vs. there, central vs. marginal, "doing the work of civilization"; "Eternal shame on the hero!" Perspectives on culpability; women, the family, the state; "Part of the scandal of their misdeeds was that a woman played so visible a role in them." "Stories were told"; the Marchese toasts a wife and rows a galley; "misogyny's usefulness." The Cavaliere's wife visits Naples, prays for the hero; Baron Scarpia as tempter; the victimage of emotional women. The "opera's Titus" vs. "history's." The Marchese, a painter, and the diva; the Baron's deceptions and devices; emotions and power; the diva's revenge.

Useless pleadings and implacable victors; “Mercy is what takes us beyond nature.” (See also G124.)

“7.” Things to care about; politics and costumes; pregnancy disguised, disgrace rebutted; the flattery of representation. The hero’s shameful butchery, weakness. “Triple disgrace”; the Cavaliere is dismissed as envoy, goes sightseeing on the hero’s flagship; the correctness of the hero and Emma, the Cavaliere feels excluded. What to wear, how to return, to England; reluctantly, by land—from Leghorn, via Rome (the Queen), via Florence (the trio), to Vienna (reunion); the Queen thinks of opera and a diva (“Baron Scarpia et mort”); the trio on to Prague, to Dresden, to Anhalt-Dessau and a miniature Vesuvius (or not). Arrival (via hired packet) at Yarmouth; the trio’s ignorance, the crowds’ acclaim; the hero, his wife, his father; dressing for dinner, for the Admiralty, for the royal levee; her ladyship and the press (“Attitudes will be much more in vogue this winter than shape or feature”); cartoons and rumor; society stages: Drury Lane, the Admiralty; the hero publicly snubs his wife; a trio again; the Cavaliere applies for a pension instead of a peerage. Christmas with kindred; William’s compo-cement abbey at Fonthill. “Oody Oody Purbum”; recipes for happiness. The Cavaliere’s second thoughts; William’s picture gallery, bedroom, his study; collecting as revenge, as sequestration. Spiritual instruments; coveting ecstasy, excess; “ideal self-sufficiency” and unfinished fantasies. “A cathedral of art,” imaginary furnishings, William’s disappointment; “a ruin in the making.” A shattered (Portland) vase restored, for the (historical, perspectival) moment. The hero’s (historical) reputation; deadly costumes and narrative (projectile) velocity. Emma delivers the hero’s daughter; keeping up social appearances; dancing the tarantella with Fatima: “Pure energy, pure defiance, pure foreboding,” “the aliveness of being alive.” The Cavaliere’s kindness. His reproaches; he “had to sell what he had to sell”; “Then the Cavaliere made his will.” The hero’s farmstead in Surrey; the Cavaliere’s losses, his dreams. The Cavaliere, bedridden and breath-short, climbs the mountain; “So this is dying.”

“Part Three.” Reproduces the dedication plate of *Collection of Etruscan, Greek and Roman Antiquities from the Cabinet of the Hon. Wm. Hamilton*.

“6 April 1803” (E38). Comprises two paragraph-length segments spanning twelve pages. (1) The Cavaliere, on his deathbed, confuses memory and experience, the hero and Tolo; compares one-eyed sight and his own closed eyes, Naples and England, himself and Pliny, death by drowning to death by gunshot, the ignorant and the foolish, an aged Neapolitan and himself, endless stories and a closed window, the late kindness of his wife and the ugliness of the brute who murdered Winckelmann, vivid dreams of terror and waking memories more pleasant, his own enthusiasms and the King’s, the King’s enthusiasms to the Queen’s discontent, himself to Charles, Catherine to an earthquake-buried child, his own views to Pagano’s, Pliny to Tolo, Pliny to Nelson, “Old customs” and “New sentiments,” his hearing to theirs. (2) Awake, though no longer capable of hearing, the Cavaliere ponders the sense of touch, of heat and cold; the smell of the volcano; thinks of music with which to lure guests and others

(Catherine, Jack) to climb the volcano, of saving Jack, of feeling Jack's weight on his chest; of his antiquarian enthusiasms and his "fall into excess"; of his wife's embrace and the air "streaming out" of his mouth; of his "genuine achievements" and the stories by which people are remembered, his "luck" vs. Pliny the Elder's. "I would like to be remembered for the volcano."

"Part Four." Seven views of the volcano in various stages of de(con)struction.

"1." A posthumous monologue by Catherine, speaking herself by "speaking of him," comparing her own childhood to the Cavaliere's, his marital attentiveness to her "predisposition to melancholy" and longing for "a holy martyr's death"; her taste in music to his taste for opera; her wifely duty vs. previously unacknowledged feelings of chagrin; how women are thought of (and think) differently than men. "I should be able to imagine a life without him, but I cannot."

"2." A posthumous monologue by Mary Cadogan. Compares her own "boldness" in leaving her daughter for London ("being a mother was not yet all for me") and Emma's in following her only a year later. Doctors and nobles; Mary follows Emma to Sir Harry's ("And Sir Harry did teach her to ride"). Sir Harry's bastard, kinds of love; Charles rescues her from "the next step for a woman." Charles and books; words and sums. A happy life and a heartbreaking Welshman; the sexual politics of names. "Done" with men; back with her "darling" ("That is true love, the mother for a child"). A spendthrift Charles and his prodigal uncle; the economy of sex. Arts of singing and bedding. Wishing "the world were topsy-turvy." The Cavaliere and Emma; fathers and daughters; mothers, daughters, and purity. Love and remembrance; marriage and England; women and tears. Opera and identification. Who could resist "the little admiral?" Then "everything happened at once." Sailing for Sicily; premonitions of maternity. Going back to England; ducks, grooms, and gardeners. Men "just like women." The "old husband" dies; "a heartless mean will." Evicted by Charles. Letters from Nelson, news of his death. Smaller and smaller dwellings. Emma and Mr. Goldsmid. Deserted by everyone.

"3." A posthumous monologue by Emma Hamilton, as if responding to her critics, describing "some kind of magic about" her, her sense of difference and vocation, her craving "to pierce and be pierced with a look," her ability to listen; her easy successes, her (unacknowledged) triumph over her temper, her residual class-consciousness; the consequences of flattery, defects of beauty, the velocity of change; life after the hero's death, the death of lust; a list of charges ("Oh, yes, and complicity in murder") and a lack of guilt; exile to France with the hero's daughter; mothers and daughters; the cruel and the dutiful; refusals of consolation. "She had gone for the priest."

"4" (G115). A posthumous monologue in two segments, (a) an upper-class woman patriot, a poet, recounts the counter-revolution and her imprisonment; her preference for beheading rather than hanging, her choice of costume, her fears on her last night; asking for coffee in the morning, giving a fellow poet a scrap of time to write in; thoughts of Virgil ("Perhaps one day even this will be a joy to

recall”) and a smile; being carted past the market square to the church guardhouse; a last embrace, a last supper, (b) Eleonora de Fonseca Pimentel ponders the politics of history and nomenclature, her life as a prodigious author and her successful suit for legal separation from her husband (“Then I stood alone”), her break with her royal patrons, her Ode to Liberty, her journalistic devotion to education and her neglect of women’s rights, her disgust with privilege and with how well people “adapt to abjection,” her inability to understand cynicism; her unutterable “hatred and contempt” for the hero, her estimates of Sir William (“an upper-class dilettante”) and his wife (a “nullity” who “would have enlisted herself with the same ardor in the cause of whomever she loved”); the relationship of love and justice, of anger and fear, of being a woman to worldly accomplishment, of personal glory and true civility. “They thought they were civilized. They were despicable. Damn them all.”

- A28a*                    *The Volcano Lover: A Romance*. Franklin Center, PA: Franklin Library, 1992.419 pp.  
Privately printed, “by special arrangement” with FSG and Cape, under the aegis of “The Signed First Edition Society.”  
“A Special Message for the First Edition from Susan Sontag” (G126). Links the Bloomsbury genesis of *A28*, in a collector’s expedition to a London print shop, with her first visit, as an “adolescent wife”; though seeking architectural prints, she happened upon landscapes, unsigned, of a volcanic region, originally illustrating Sir William Hamilton’s *Campi Phlegraei*. Takes the book resulting from her “love at first sight” fascination with the prints as “cosmopolitan” in a specifically “American” way, in a specifically “modern” idiom of “many voices.” Adduces the title, and *A28*’s (operatic) epigraph, as detailing the themes of obsession, of beauty, of women’s voices, of her own “over-the-top” identifications with her characters; sees *A28* as coming “closer” than her earlier books to containing “everything” she cares, knows, about.
- A28b*                    *The Volcano Lover: A Romance*. London: Jonathan Cape, 1992. 419pp.
- \**A28c*                    *A vulkán szerelmese*. Trans. (Hungarian) József Szili. Kiadó: Holnap, 1993. 386 pp.
- \**A28d*                    *Der Liebhaber des Vulkans: Roman*. Trans. (Ger.) Isabell Lorenz. Munich: Hanser, 1993. 548 pp.
- \**A28e*                    *De vulkaanminnaar*. Trans. (Dutch) Heleen ten Holt. Baarn: Uitgeverij Anthos, 1993. 431 pp.
- \**A28f*                    *Manden der elskede vulkaner*. Trans. (Dan.) Kirsten Jørgensen. Copenhagen: Gyldendal, 1993.407 pp.

- \*A28g *Mannen som elsket vulkaner: En roman.* Trans. (Norw.) Ingrid Haug. Oslo: Cappelens, 1993. 410 pp.
- \*A28h *O amante do vulcão.* Trans. (Port.) Isa Mara Lando. Sao Paulo: Companhia das Letras, 1993. 422 pp.
- \*A28i *Tulivuoren rakastaja.* Trans. (Fin.) Seppo Lojonen. Helsinki: Kunstannusosakeyhtiö Otava, 1993. 432 pp.
- \*A28j *The Volcano Lover: A Romance.* London: Vintage, 1993. 419pp.
- A28k *The Volcano Lover: A Romance.* New York: Anchor, Doubleday, 1993.419pp.

A29 *The Best American Essays 1992.* New York: Ticknor & Fields, 1992. xix +331pp.

“Introduction.” Comprises fourteen unnumbered segments. (1–2) Declares her impassioned interest in essays, as being equally as eventful as novels or poems, by reference to Shaw, Mann, Henry James, and others, though today’s essayists are likely to have an ironic relation to “literary culture.” (3–5) Defines the essay negatively, as *not* categorically limited, or as a wide-ranging category about which writers are themselves defensive despite the essay’s status as “a very old literary form” exhibiting “extraordinary continuity” from the Roman era through the nineteenth century. (6–8) Observes the subjective, ephemeral, eccentric quality of essays, which renders the writer who is *only* an essayist “perishable,” by contrast with poets or novelists whose essays are read “because Stein is Stein is Stein.” (9–10) Essays are both tentative (à la Montaigne) yet distinctively “assertive,” topical; the most “durable” essays (accordingly) are those that “display” a “complex mind and a distinctive prose voice,” a task for which American writers are especially well-suited. (11–3) Takes “Intelligence” as “a literary virtue”; takes “literature” as “an accumulation,” a “party,” in which singularity derives from and grants permission to “other people’s ideas.” (14) Cites Camilo José Cela and Manet on literature’s (or art’s) essential negativity.

## SECTION B

### Essays, Articles, and Review Essays

B1 “Of Freud and the New Resurrection of the Flesh.” *Supplement (Columbia Daily Spectator)*, 28 Apr. 1961, 3–4.

Annotated at [A2](#) as “Psychoanalysis and Norman O. Brown’s *Life Against Death*.”

B2 “Some Notes on Antonioni and Others.” *Supplement (Columbia Daily Spectator)*, 27 Oct. 1961, 3–5.

Published under the pseudonym of “Calvin Koff,” [B2](#)’s first five paragraphs are nearly identical to those of “A Note on Novels and Films” in [A2](#). The remark that cinema is a “reactionary medium” in exhibiting “the trappings of melodrama and high emotion” is elaborated in [B2](#) by comparison of Fellini, Visconti, and Antonioni. Where Visconti’s “is a sensuous, direct world,” Antonioni (especially in *L’Avventura*) is a filmmaker of “indirectness and subtlety.” The remainder of the piece comprises extracts from a *Mondo Nuovo* interview with Antonioni circa *L’Avventura*.

B3 “Piety without Content.” *Second Coming* 1.3 (Mar. 1962):50–3.

The text annotated at [A2](#) is less a “book review” than the [B3](#) original; a highly critical accounting of Walter Kaufmann’s selection of materials for *Religion from Tolstoy to Camus* is relegated to a footnote in [A2](#), for instance.

B4 “Is the Reader Necessary?” *Partisan Review* 30 (Summer 1963): 260–8.

The [A2](#) text (“Nathalie Sarraute and the Novel”) differs considerably from [B4](#). Where [A2](#) explains the conservatism of the novel by reference to its nineteenth-century inheritance, [B4](#) is more phenomenological, invoking the fact that avant-garde novels require sustained cooperation on the reader’s part to be experienced at all. Where [A2](#) understands the new novelists as rejecting “psychology,” [B4](#) invokes their intent to be difficult or boring. Where the book prefers Robbe-Grillet’s innovations to Sarraute’s dismissal of “aesthetic enjoyment,” [B4](#) returns to the question of “the book,” suggesting that Sarraute’s objection to “familiar appearances” could be met by “changes in the physical object itself; books could be issued in single copies for museum exhibition, or could be read “in book concerts,” or could be available only to critics—which would relieve readers of the “arduous task” of reading and writers of the duty to fight every literary battle over again.

- B4a* Excerpts. In *Modern Romance Literatures*, A Library of Literary Criticism, edited by Dorothy Nyren Curley and Arthur Curley, 422. New York: Frederick Ungar Publishing Co., 1967.
- B4b* Excerpts. In *Contemporary Literary Criticism*, Vol. 4, edited by Carolyn Riley, 465–6. Detroit: Gale Research, 1975.
- B4c* Excerpts. In *Modern French Literatures*, Vol. 2, A Library of Literary Criticism, edited by Debra Popkin and Michael Popkin, 373–4. New York: Frederick Ungar Publishing Co., 1977.

B5 “The Ideal Husband.” *New York Review of Books*, 26 Sept. 1963, 1–3. See [A26](#).

Annotated at [A2](#) as “Camus’ *Notebooks*.”

- B5a* Excerpts. In *Modern Romance Literatures*, A Library of Literary Criticism, edited by Dorothy Nyren Curley and Arthur Curley, 93. New York: Frederick Ungar Publishing Co., 1967.
- B5b* Excerpts. In *Contemporary Literary Criticism*, Vol. 4, edited by Carolyn Riley, 88–9. Detroit: Gale Research, 1975.

B6 “A Hero of Our Time.” *New York Review of Books*, 28 Nov. 1963, 6–8.

The [A2](#) text (“The Anthropologist as Hero”) includes roughly five paragraphs of new matter. Two are added at the beginning of the essay. The eighth paragraph of [B6](#) becomes, once revised, two paragraphs of the [A2](#) text.

- B6a* “The Anthropologist as Hero.” In *Claude Lévi-Strauss: The Anthropologist as Hero*, edited by E. Nelson Hayes and Tanya Hayes, 184–96. Cambridge: M.I.T. Press, 1970.  
Reprints the [A2](#) text.

B7 “Going to Theater.” *Partisan Review* 31 (Winter 1964):95–102.

The first of a series of “Going to” pieces covering the 1964 New York theater scene, [B7](#) is the only one *not* reprinted in [A2](#). Takes “intermissions” as symptomatic of “everything boring and diluted” about the contemporary stage; audiences are encouraged to talk about (vs. experience) the plays, while playwrights are induced (via “the curtain line”) to employ “an entirely false” dramatic punctuation. This “ghoulish transaction” of playwright and audience is evident in Tony Richardson’s production of John Osborne’s *Luther*, which is less about spiritual reform than constipation. Alan Schneider’s production of Albee’s *The Ballad of the Sad Cafe* evinces a similar bad faith, by encouraging (through casting) the spectator’s voyeuristic wish “to see a deformed person without being seen back.” Because “real shocks” in art are formal, a “vehement” production like the Living Theater’s *The Brig* is preferable to “the calculated falseness” of

*Luther and Sad Cafe*. Particularly damaging to contemporary American theater is the “ugly, hard” acting style of Broadway, and the “shoddiness” of Off-Broadway productions, the only current exception being a production of Genet’s *The Maids* notable for concentrating “as much on the use of the actors’ bodies as on the text.”

B8 “Going to Theater (and the Movies).” *Partisan Review* 31 (Spring 1964): 284–93.

As annotated at A2—as the first part of “Going to Theater, Etc.”—though the original version includes four paragraphs dropped from A2. The deleted B8 material discusses three plays—John Carlino’s *Telemachus Clay*, Adrienne Kennedy’s *Funnyhouse of a Negro*, and Beckett’s *Play*—all of which are praised for “their experiments with new forms for the stage.”

B8a Excerpts. In *Twentieth-Century American Literature*, Vol. 5, The Chelsea House Library of Literary Criticism, edited by Harold Bloom, 2632–3. New York, 1987.  
Reprints B8 paragraphs 2–5 (on Miller’s *After the Fall*).

B9 “Going to Theater, Etc.” *Partisan Review* 31 (Summer 1964): 389–99.

Annotated at A2 as the second part of “Going to Theater, Etc.”—though the B9 text also includes a brief passage on Tiny Tim (the singer) not present in A2.

B9a Excerpt. In *Contemporary Literary Criticism*, Vol. 4, edited by Carolyn Riley, 40. Detroit: Gale Research, 1975.  
Reprints the B9 paragraph to the effect that Baldwin’s *Blues for Mr. Charlie* is less about race than sex.

B9b Excerpt. In *Twentieth-Century American Literature*, Vol. 1, The Chelsea House Library of Literary Criticism, edited by Harold Bloom, 283. New York, 1987.  
Reprints the same paragraph reprinted at B9a.

B10 “Spiritual Style in the Films of Robert Bresson.” *Seventh Art* 2.3 (Summer 1964):2–7, 23–5. See A8, A18.

Annotated at A2.

B10a Excerpts. In *Contemporary Literary Criticism*, Vol. 16, edited by Sharon R. Gunton, 106–8. Detroit: Gale Research, 1981.

B11 “Notes on ‘Camp.’” *Partisan Review* 31 (Fall 1964):515–30. See A8, A18, A19, A21.

The **A2** text differs only slightly from **B11**. **A2** refers to Louis Feuillade at the end of segment 6, and the word “style” in **B11** is periodically replaced in **A2** by “artifice.”

- B11a** “Camp.” Trans. (Swed.) Torsten Manns. *Chaplin* (Stockholm) No. 68 (1966):336–43.  
Translates the **A2** text. See **K14**.
- B11b** “Notas sobre ‘Camp.’” *Revista de accidente* (Madrid), 2d sen, 14 (July, Aug., Sept. 1966):310–27.  
A Spanish translation of **B11**.
- B11c** “Anmerkungen zu ‘Camp.’” [Trans. (Ger.) Mark W. Rien.] *Akzente* (Munich) 13 (Dec. 1966):501–21.  
Translates the **A2** text.
- B11d** “La sensibilité ‘camp.’” In *Les U.S.A. à la recherche de leur identité: Rencontres avec 40 écrivains américains*, edited by Pierre Dommergues, 88–95. Paris: Éditions Bernard Grasset, 1967.  
Reprints **A2f** segments 1–3, 7–17, 25, 38–53, and 58.
- B11e** “Notes on ‘Camp.’” In *The Sense of the Sixties*, edited by Edward Quinn and Paul J. Dolan, 89–105. New York: Free Press, 1968.  
Reprints the **A2** text.
- B11f** “‘Kyanpu’ towa nanika.” *Paideia* No. 5 (1969):103–21.  
A Japanese translation of the **A2** text.
- B11g** “Notes on ‘Camp.’” In *Les États-Unis d’aujourd’hui par les textes*, edited by Pierre Dommergues, Marianne Debousy, and Hélène Cixous, 188–92. Paris: Librairie Armand Colin, 1969.  
Reprints segments 1–14 of the **A2** text.
- B11h** “Notatki o kampie.” Trans. (Pol.) Wanda Wertenstein. *Literatura na świecie* (Warsaw) No. 9 (1979):307–23.  
Translates the **A2** text.
- B11i** “Notes on ‘Camp.’” In *Art Theory and Criticism: An Anthology of Formalist, Avant-Garde, Contextualist and Post-Modernist Thought*, edited by Sally Everett, 96–109. Jefferson, NC: McFarland, 1991.  
Reprints the **A2** text.
- B11j** “Anmerkungen zu ‘Camp.’” Trans. (Ger.) Mark W. Rien. In *Falsche Dokumente: Postmoderne Texte aus den USA*, 109–30. Leipzig: Reclam Verlag, 1993.  
Translates the **A2** text.

B12 “On Godard’s ‘Vivre Sa Vie.’” *Moviegoer* No. 2 (Summer-Autumn 1964):2–10.

As annotated at [A2](#), though the [A2](#) text revises [B12](#); additions (chiefly to the prefatory note) update details of Godard’s career. [A2](#) segment 17 praises Godard’s interest in “philosophical films” and his effort to “create a new film language” for dealing with ideas.

*B12a* “On Godard’s *Vivre Sa Vie*” In *Jean-Luc Godard*, edited by Toby Mussman, 87–99. New York: E.P.Dutton & Co., 1968. Reprints [B12](#), though it deletes the “Note.”

B13 “All the World’s a Stage.” *Book Week (New York Herald Tribune)*, 1 Mar. 1964, 1, 12–13. See [A8](#), [A21](#).

As annotated at [A2](#) as “Reflections on *The Deputy*,” with one important exception. Where [A2](#) attacks as “facile” Hochhuth’s contention that “universal military conscription” has made the roles of victims and executioners interchangeable, the [B13](#) text sees this as “an excellent theatrical idea.”

*B13a* “Reflections on *The Deputy*” In *The Storm Over The Deputy*, edited by Eric Bentley, 117–23. New York: Grove Press, 1964. Revises [B13](#) in the direction of [A2](#); Hochhuth’s “conscription” metaphor is “excellent” and “facile” in [B13a](#).

*B13b* Excerpts. In *Contemporary Literary Criticism*, Vol. 4, edited by Carolyn Riley, 230–1. Detroit: Gale Research, 1975.

*B13c* “Gedanken zu Hochhuths ‘Der Stellvertreter.’” [Trans. (Ger.) Mark W.Rien.] In *Rolf Hochhuth: Eingriff in die Zeitgeschichte*, edited by Walter Hinck, 107–16. Reinbek bei Hamburg: Rowohlt Verlag, 1981. Reprints the [A2e](#) translation.

B14 “Putting Up a Stiff Fight with Old Artillery.” *Book Week (New York Herald Tribune)*, 10 May 1964, 5, 10. See [A26](#).

The text annotated at [A2](#) as “The Literary Criticism of Georg Lukács” lacks two [B14](#) paragraphs comparing Marxism as a “complex, eminently respectable intellectual” method with the “mess of political dogmatisms,” “ideology” in the sense denounced by Marx, it has become.

B15 “Against Interpretation.” *Evergreen Review* No. 34 (Dec. 1964): 76–80, 93. See [A18](#), [A21](#), [A26](#).

The text annotated at [A2](#) differs only slightly from [B15](#). Most noticeably, [A2](#) lacks references to Fellini in segment 7.

*B15a* “Imod fortolkning.” Trans. (Dan.) Erik Wiedemann. *Vindrosen* (Copenhagen) No. 4 (Aug. 1966):13–23.

- Translates the [A2](#) text.
- B15b* “Contrainterpretación.” *Mundo nuevo* (Paris) No. 7 (Jan. 1967):75–80.  
A Spanish translation of the [A2](#) text.
- B15c* “Against Interpretation.” In *Evergreen Review Reader 1957–1967*, edited by Barney Rosset, 661–5. New York: Grove Press, 1968.
- B15d* “Against Interpretation.” In *American Literature*, Vol. 2, edited by Richard Poirier and William L. Vance, 1221–9. Boston: Little, Brown & Co., 1970.  
Reprints the [A2](#) text.
- B15e* “Against Interpretation.” In *Literary Criticism: An Introductory Reader*, edited by Lionel Trilling, 610–9. New York: Holt, Rinehart & Winston, 1970.  
Reprints the [A2](#) text, with extensive editorial footnotes.
- B15f* “Against Interpretation.” In *Media for Our Time: An Anthology*, edited by Dennis DeNitto, 460–9. New York: Holt, Rinehart & Winston, 1971.  
Reprints the [A2](#) text.
- B15g* “Against Interpretation.” In *The New Humanities: Culture, Crisis, Change*, edited by Ralph L. Carnes and Valerie Carnes, 201–8. New York: Holt, Rinehart & Winston, 1972.  
Reprints the [A2](#) text.
- B15h* “Against Interpretation.” In *Twentieth Century Literary Criticism: A Reader*, edited by David Lodge, 652–60. London: Longman, 1972.  
Reprints the [A2](#) text.
- B15i* “Against Interpretation.” In *Issues in Contemporary Literary Criticism*, edited by Gregory T. Polletta, 152–60, 183. Boston: Little, Brown & Co.; Little, Brown & Co. (Canada), 1973.  
Reprints the [A2](#) text.
- B15j* “Przeciw interpretacji.” Trans. (Pol.) Maria Olejniczak. *Literatura na świecie* (Warsaw) No. 9 (1979):292–305.  
Translates the [A2](#) text.
- B15k* “Against Interpretation.” In *The Critical Tradition: Classic Texts and Contemporary Trends*, edited by David H. Richter, 545–50. Boston: Bedford, St. Martin’s Press, 1989.  
Reprints the [A2](#) text.
- B15l* “Against Interpretation.” In *The Bedford Introduction to Literature*, 2d ed., edited by Michael Meyer, 1798–9. New York: Bedford, St. Martin’s Press, 1990.  
Reprints segment 4 and part of segment 5 of [B15](#).

- B15m* “From *Against Interpretation*.” In *Postmodernism: A Reader*, edited by Patricia Waugh, 48–55. London: Edward Arnold, 1992.  
Reprints the [A2](#) text, minus segment numbers.
- B15n* “Pret interpretacija.” Trans. (Latvian) Sandra Rutmane. *Kentaurs XXI (Riga)* No. 2 (1992):66–75.  
Translates the [A2](#) text.
- B15o* “Protiv interpretatsii.” Trans. (Rus.) V. Golysheva. *Inostrannaia literatura* (Moscow) No. 1 (1992):212–6.  
Translates the [A2](#) text.
- B15p* “Against Interpretation.” In *The Bedford Introduction to Literature*, 3d ed., edited by Michael Meyer, 2020. Boston: Bedford, St. Martin’s Press, 1993.  
Reprints most of segment 4 and part of segment 5 of [B15](#).
- B16* “Marat/Sade/Artaud.” *Partisan Review* 32 (Spring 1965):210–9. See [A8](#), [B23](#).  
As annotated at [A2](#), though [B16](#) adduces Carolee Schneemann and Lawrence Ferlinghetti in the third section where [A2](#) adduces Jerzy Grotowski.
- B16a* Excerpt. In *Modern Romance Literatures, A Library of Literary Criticism*, edited by Dorothy Nyren Curley and Arthur Curley, 28. New York: Frederick Ungar Publishing Co., 1967.
- B16b* “Marat/Sade/Artaud.” In *The Modern Theatre: Readings and Documents*, edited by Daniel Seltzer, 400–9. Boston: Little, Brown & Co.; Little, Brown & Co. (Canada), 1967.  
Reprints the [A2](#) text.
- \*B16c* “Marat-Sade-Artaud.” Trans. (Ital.) Ettore Capriolo. *Teatro Milano* No. 1 (Spring 1967).  
Probably translates the [A2](#) text, per [A2d](#).
- B16d* Excerpts. In *Contemporary Literary Criticism*, Vol. 15, edited by Sharon R. Gunton and Laurie Lanzen Harris, 564–5. Detroit: Gale Research, 1980.

*B17* “On Style.” *Partisan Review* 32 (Fall 1965):543–60. See [A18](#), [A21](#), [A26](#).

Though the text annotated at [A2](#), like [B17](#), has 24 unnumbered segments, the [A2](#) version adds ten paragraphs of new matter. Four (describing art as the “experience” of form) are added to the segment 7 discussion of expressivity. A paragraph is added to the beginning of [B17](#) segment 10 defining morality (in Kantian terms) as “a code of acts.” Three paragraphs are added to [B17](#) segment 11, to the effect that a work of art (“so far as it is a work of art”) cannot “advocate anything at all” (here is where the famous reference to Riefenstahl

makes its [A2](#) appearance). The [A2](#) text adds two paragraphs to the [B17](#) version of segment 14 contrasting the singularity of artworks (and individuals) to historical and sociological generalizations that, like categorical moral judgments, alienate people from their own experiences.

- B17a* “Susan Sontag: Some Notes on Style.” *Arts and Artists* (London), July 1967, 28–9.  
Excerpts segments 1, 4–5, 12, 18, and 21 of the [A2](#) text.
- B17b* “O stilu.” Trans. (Serbo-Croat.) Vesna Gaspari. *Delo* (Belgrade) No. 30 (Oct. 1984):75–97.  
Translates the [A2](#) text.
- B17c* “Za Stila.” Trans. (Bulgarian) Hristina Kochemidova. *S’vremennik* No. 1 (1989):360–73.  
Translates the [A2](#) text.

[B18](#) “An Art of Radical Juxtaposition.” *Second Coming* 1.6 (Jan. 1965):20–4. See [A8](#), [A21](#).

As annotated at [A2](#) as “Happenings: An Art of Radical Juxtaposition,” with two chief exceptions. The [B18](#) paragraph relating Happenings to Surrealism is significantly reworded in [A2](#) (“content” in one becomes “form” in the other), and the [B18](#) paragraph citing Simone de Beauvoir includes a long aside on the “economics” of “camp” lacking in [A2](#). Also missing from [A2](#) is the name of Allan Kaprow, who is listed as co-author of [B18](#) in the magazine. Though one of the two accompanying photos is of a Kaprow Happening, the “voice” we hear is Sontag’s, and she alone “signs” the essay.

- B18a* “Happenings: An Art of Radical Juxtaposition.” In *Contemporary Art and Man*, edited by Shoichi Saeki, 140–55, 224–30. [Tokyo:] Kenkyusha, 1977.  
Reprints the [A2](#) text.

[B19](#) Opinion, Please (“From New York: Susan Sontag”). *Mademoiselle*, Apr. 1965, 58, 60. See [A21](#).

The text annotated at [A2](#) as “One Culture and the New Sensibility” is more emphatic than [B19](#) in naming C.P.Snow as interlocutor; it also contains a passage of ten paragraphs (equating roughly with sentences 6 through 8 of the [A2](#) summary) missing from the magazine version. Remarks about “boredom” are also added to the [A2](#) version.

- B19a* “En kultur och den nya sensibiliteten.” Trans. (Swed.) Leif Zern. *BLM* (Stockholm) 35 (Oct. 1966):609–13.  
Translates and abridges the [A2](#) text; drops three paragraphs dealing with Ortega y Gasset.

- B19b* “The Basic Unit of Contemporary Art Is Not the Idea, But the Analysis of and Extension of Sensations.” In *McLuhan: Hot and Cool*, edited by Gerald Emanuel Stearn, 252–63. New York: Dial Press, 1967.  
Reprints the [A2](#) text.
- B19c* “One Culture and the New Sensibility.” In *Popular Culture and the Expanding Consciousness*, edited by Ray B. Browne, 25–36. New York: John Wiley & Sons, 1973.  
Reprints the [A2](#) text.
- B19d* “One Culture and the New Sensibility.” In *The Cultural Debate Part I*, Literary Taste, Culture and Mass Communication, Vol. 13, edited by Peter Davison, Rolfe Myersohn, and Edward Shils, 159–70. Cambridge, UK: Chadwyck-Healy; Teaneck, NJ: Somerset House, 1978.  
Reprints the [A2](#) text.
- B19e* “One Culture and the New Sensibility.” In *The Sixties*, edited by Gerald Howard, 293–303. New York: Washington Square Press, Pocket Books, 1982.  
Reprints the [A2](#) text.
- B19f* “Kultura a nový způsob vnímání.” Trans. (Czech) Ivana Doležalová. *Světová literatura* (Prague) No. 6 (1985): 41–6.  
Translates the [A2](#) text, though a passage quoted from Buckminster Fuller is dropped. (Is one of three pieces titled separately but published together under the shared title “Já, a tak dále.” *Světová literatura* is probably an annual, published in book form. See [C1g](#), [C7b](#).)
- B19g* “One Culture and the New Sensibility.” In *The Sixties: Art, Politics and Media of Our Most Explosive Decade*, edited by Gerald Howard, 293–303. New York: Paragon House, 1991.  
Reprints the [A2](#) text.

**B20** “Pop Goes the Easel.” *Book Week* (*New York Herald Tribune*), 25 July 1965, 1, 12–3.

Takes John Rublowsky’s *Pop Art* and Henry Geldzahler’s *American Painting in the Twentieth Century* as illustrating the “range of useless writing that afflicts American art today.” Attacks Rublowsky’s book for promoting “cultural Goldwaterism,” offering a picture “of a happy America well rid of the gloomy strivings for quality attributed to Europe.” Attacks Geldzahler for his “pedestrian,” “paste-together” writing. Suggests that “labels” are more harmful as applied to art than to theater or music—in part because of the speed with which those labels become (literally) commercial—though she contends that the (essentially realistic) “subject matter” labels of “Pop Art” miss altogether the ironic detachment of Jasper Johns and Andy Warhol, which links their work to the

formalism of Cézanne. Expresses the hope that standards of writing about art could be raised if “painting and sculpture could be brought within the province of literary intellectuals, where much higher standards of critical discourse exist.”

*B20a* “Non-Writing and the Art Scene.” In *The New Art: A Critical Anthology*, edited by Gregory Battcock, 152–60. New York: E.P.Dutton & Co.; Toronto: Clarke, Irwin & Co., 1966.

B21 “The Imagination of Disaster.” *Commentary*, Oct. 1965, 42–8. See [A8](#), [A21](#).

As annotated at [A2](#), except the first three paragraphs of [B21](#) are the last three of the [A2](#) text.

*B21a* “Tuhon fantasiat.” Trans. (Fin.) Pentti Lumirae. In *Uuteen elokuvaan*, edited by Peter Von Bagh, 49–65. Porvoo: Werner Söderström Osakeyhtiö, 1967.  
Translates the [A2](#) text.

*B21b* “The Imagination of Disaster.” In *Concepts of Literature*, edited by James William Johnson, 361–70. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1970.  
Reprints the [A2](#) text.

*B21c* “The Imagination of Disaster.” In *Film and the Liberal Arts*, edited by T.J.Ross, 275–91. New York: Holt, Rinehart & Winston, 1970.

*B21d* “The Imagination of Disaster.” In *Science Fiction: The Future*, edited by Dick Allen, 312–24. New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1971.  
Reprints the [A2](#) text.

*B21e* “The Imagination of Disaster.” In *Things in the Driver’s Seat: Readings in Popular Culture*, edited by Harry Russell Huebel, 252–66. New York: Rand McNally & Co., 1972.  
Reprints the [A2](#) text.

*B21f* “The Imagination of Disaster.” In *Film Theory and Criticism: Introductory Readings*, edited by Gerald Mast and Marshall Cohen, 422–37. New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 1974.  
Reprints the [A2](#) text.

*B21g* “The Imagination of Disaster.” In *Hal in the Classroom: Science Fiction Films*, edited by Ralph J.Amelio, 22–38. Dayton, OH: Pflaum Publishing, 1974.  
Reprints the [A2](#) text.

- B21h* "The Imagination of Disaster." In *Science Fiction: A Collection of Critical Essays*, edited by Mark Rose, 116–31. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1976.  
Reprints the [A2](#) text.
- B21i* "The Imagination of Disaster." In *Awake in the Dark: An Anthology of American Film Criticism, 1915 to the Present*, edited by David Denby, 263–78. New York: Vintage, Random House; Toronto: Random House of Canada, 1977.  
Reprints the [A2](#) text.
- B21j* "Obraz zagłady." Trans. (Pol.) Maja Gottesman. *Kultura* (Warsaw) No. 27 (2 July 1978):14.  
Translates the [A2](#) text.
- B21k* "The Imagination of Disaster." In *Film Theory and Criticism: Introductory Readings*, 2d ed., edited by Gerald Mast and Marshall Cohen, 488–504. New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 1979.  
Reprints the [A2](#) text.
- B21l* "The Imagination of Disaster." In *Film Theory and Criticism: Introductory Readings*, 3d ed., edited by Gerald Mast and Marshall Cohen, 451–65. New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 1985.  
Reprints the [A2](#) text.

B22 "Apocalypse in a Paint Box." *Book Week (Washington Post)*, 21 Nov. 1965, 4, 26–7.

Describes Maurice Nadeau's *The History of Surrealism* as "exegetical" (vs. "critical") in that it fails to confront the historical question "what is alive and what is dead in surrealism?" Avows, because the "surrealists challenged traditional ethics by *aesthetic* standards, while they challenged the traditional notions about works of art" by ethical standards, that Surrealism is best thought of as a "strategy" (cf., "dreams" for Freud, "revolution" for Marx) for exploring "a general 'crisis of consciousness.'" Nadeau slights this historical element of Surrealism, though he is not alone in giving Surrealism less than its modernist due. Yet in some respects (its "inquiry into violence") Surrealism has been "outflanked" by historical events, hence needs reexamination. No longer "new," nor a cult sensibility, Surrealism should be valued because "in its complexities and contradictions, it continues both to abolish itself and to generate new and flexible modes of consciousness that are alive and questioning."

B23 "Literature." In *The Great Ideas Today 1966*, edited by Robert M. Hutchins and Mortimer J. Adler, 146–91. Chicago: Encyclopedia Britannica; New York: F.A.Praeger, 1966. See [A2e](#), [A2f](#).

Surveys "the year's work in literature" via five headings and on the basis of three assumptions: "that literature might be considered as a species of the genus

‘works of art’”; that literature “may also be considered as a work of thought” especially thought *about* literature; and that literature, like art generally, is “in a state of crisis.”

*“Realism”—The Main Tradition.* Describes a situation in which “the best imaginative prose of our time is bent on violating” the traditional assumption “that the task of prose fiction is to render a world”—in “terms of a more or less credible story,” “linear in construction,” “peopled with complex characters”—in the mode of “ordinary” discourse. Discusses (among other books) Graham Greene’s *The Comedians*, Iris Murdoch’s *The Red and the Green*, and Flannery O’Connor’s *Everything That Rises Must Converge* as instances of “traditional” fiction. Reads the “black humor” school of satiric American fiction as continuous with literary realism on the premise that “attitude” is “too gross a means for distinguishing or grouping works of literature.”

*The Avant-Garde.* Considers various possibilities for experimenting with novelistic form—on the premise that literary works “should stimulate, first of all, as works of art”—against the *discontinuous* history of such experimentation in English. Though the “makings of an Anglo-American avant-garde tradition exists” in works by James Joyce, Virginia Woolf, Samuel Beckett, Gertrude Stein and others, “most of the novels that critics take seriously” nowadays “are written as if these writers had never existed.” Partial exceptions to the rule include William Burroughs’s *The Soft Machine*, praised for its plotless, fragmentary, cinematically multivoiced narration, and Laura Riding’s systematically self-conscious *Progress of Stories*. Where Burroughs views “the rendering of presentness as requiring that the writer become a *sensory* recording machine,” Riding takes the writer’s task as “essentially an analytic or intellectual one” whose “fundamental subject” is “the act of storytelling.”

*The Joycean Tradition.* Contrasts the “aesthete” interpretation of the call for a “poetic” prose fiction, for which “beauty” is the abiding standard, and a more contemporary interpretation that takes “complexity, range, and intellectual power” as the pertinent virtues. Though Joyce is the great exemplar of “the multiple richness of language as a vehicle of narrative,” Carlo Emilio Gadda’s *That Awful Mess on Via Merulana* and William Gass’s *Omensetter’s Luck* are significant contributions to the Joycean tradition, the former for its exuberantly Baroque use of multiple dialects and time frames, the latter for “the Dionysian energy and elevation of the writing itself.”

*The Literature of Extreme Situations.* Takes the revival of interest in Sade and surrealism as evidence of modernism’s “chronic attachment” to “extreme situations”—as if they were “more true,” “more serious,” and more capable, in their outrageousness, of having “a valuable impact on the sluggish consciousness of the contemporary audience.” A “master category” of “extremity” is “madness,” often depicted via (self-reflexive) first-person narration, as in Nabokov’s *The Eye*. Peter Weiss’s *Marat/Sade* is discussed under this rubric (in language drawn largely from B16) as is Foucault’s *Madness and Civilization*. Though madness “may be a means art *uses* to move beyond the ‘mere’

representation of mundane reality,” it may also be locked, as Foucault urges, in a “life and death” struggle with art, art’s true opposite.

*Literature: Between Art and Life.* Takes Robbe-Grillet’s call for a cinematic, descriptive, present-oriented aesthetic “of the senses, sight, and a refusal of metaphor” as answering to the traditionalist claim that the novel, in devoting “itself predominantly to perfecting itself as *art*” thereby “loses contact with ‘reality’ and with the edifying role that literature has played in the past.” Implicit in Robbe-Grillet’s call *For a New Novel* is the view that the “persuasive, didactic, and regenerative functions of serious art are not separate from the way art functions as distraction, as entertainment, as autonomous play of the mind and senses.” What we need is “more exact ways of discussing *how* art alters consciousness,” of which the media theories of Marshall McLuhan and the literary work of Gertrude Stein and William Burroughs provide additional “parascientific” models. See [K15](#).

*B23a* “Burroughs y el futuro de la novela.” *Mundo nuevo* (Paris) No. 23 (May 1968):27–33. See [A2f](#).

Annotated at [A2e](#) as “William Burroughs und der Roman,” this Spanish text clearly derives from the same English original as the German and French translations and, behind them, [B23](#). Per Sontag, there was also a Swedish translation, but [B23a](#) is the only periodical publication of the essay we have been able to locate.

*B24* “Yugoslav Report: Writers and Conferences.” *Partisan Review* 33 (Winter 1966):116–23.

Speculates on the literary and political future of PEN from the vantage point of the 1965 international congress held in Bled, Yugoslavia. Though disappointed with the “professional” aspects of the congress—the absence of “star novelists, poets, and playwrights,” the lack of “Discussions about literature useful to writers as poets, essayists and novelists”—Sontag is moved to become “an ardent PENnik” by the fraternal “good will” among the “self-appointed citizens of that hypothetical civilized world order that seems farther than ever from being realized.” Crucial here were the inspiring examples provided by Eastern European writers whose appreciation of the opportunity to talk, to each other and to Western writers, provided Sontag “a chance to discover [her] own provincialism and complacency.” Reads PEN’s history—its genesis and its defense of embattled writers—as proof of its essentially political function. Takes Arthur Miller’s intention, as incoming president, to “de-Europeanize” PEN as problematic, given the paradoxical fact that PEN’s literariness is what underwrites its political function. Advocates “a more aristocratic constitution of PEN” to insure its ability to play “its half-quixotic, half-eminently practical ‘political’ role.”

- B24a* “Carta del congreso del Pen Club.” *Dialogos* (Mexico), Jan.–Feb. 1966, 30–2.  
A Spanish translation and abridgment of *B24*.
- B24b* “Yugoslav Report: Writers and Conferences.” In *Writers and Politics: A Partisan Review Reader*, edited by Edith Kurzweil and William Phillips, 261–8. Boston: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1983.
- B25* “Film and Theatre.” *Tulane Drama Review* 11.1 (Fall 1966): 24–37. See *A2e*, *A2f*, *A21*.  
The text annotated at *A5* as “Theatre and Film” differs considerably from *B25*. The *TDR* version has eighteen unnumbered segments to *A5*’s nineteen. The third and part of the fourth segment of *B25* become the book’s segment 3. Part of *B25* segment 4 becomes part of the book’s fifth; another part becomes the book’s segment 7. *B25* segment 7 and a portion of segment 8 become the book’s segment 8; the rest of its eighth segment and part of its ninth become the book’s ninth, while the rest of *B25* segment 9 becomes the book’s tenth. *B25* segment 10 and a portion of its eleventh become the book’s eleventh. Part of *B25* segment 11 becomes the book’s twelfth. Considerable revision is necessitated by all this shuffling, though it doesn’t much change the substance of Sontag’s argument as summarized at *A5*.
- B25a* “Theatre and Film.” In *Perspectives on the Study of Film*, edited by John Stuart Katz, 73–90. Boston: Little, Brown, & Co., 1971.  
Reprints the *A5* text.
- B25b* “Film and Theatre.” In *Film Theory and Criticism: Introductory Readings*, edited by Gerald Mast and Marshall Cohen, 249–67. New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 1974.
- B25c* “Theater and Film.” In *Film and/as Literature*, edited by John Harrington, 76–92. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1977.  
Reprints the *A5* text.
- B25d* “Film and Theatre.” In *Film Theory and Criticism: Introductory Readings*, 2d ed., edited by Gerald Mast and Marshall Cohen, 359–77. New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 1979.
- B25e* “Film and Theatre.” In *Film Theory and Criticism: Introductory Readings*, 3d ed., edited by Gerald Mast and Marshall Cohen, 340–55. New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 1985.
- B25f* “Film and Theatre.” In *Film Theory and Criticism: Introductory Readings*, 4th ed., edited by Gerald Mast,

Mar shall Cohen, and Leo Braudy, 362–74. New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 1992.

B26 “The Avant-Garde and Contemporary Literature.” *Wilson Library Quarterly* 40 (June 1966):930–2, 937–40.

An edited version of a talk delivered 28 Oct. 1965 to a New York Library Association conference, B26 picks up questions of critical terminology and practice addressed elsewhere (see B4 and B23), though it adduces novel examples.

Ponders opposing ways of taking “avant-garde.” Viewed “positively,” “avant-garde” envisions a militant advance, imposing on each art an “obligation” to “evolve” in ways beyond originality and novelty. Agrees, by reference to Malraux, that a historical perspective on art is required by the availability to twentieth-century audiences of art from all periods, but questions whether the necessity for “progress” always follows from extra-aesthetic causes. Takes T.S.Eliot as finally arguing a mimetic theory in which art (the novel) is obliged to keep up with a changing “historical” reality. Suggests that artistic change can also be thought of as aesthetically motivated, on “the assumption that art is not necessarily imitation or representation.” The intuition that change in different arts works differently leads to the claim that large-scale “decline of the West” explanations of change are too simple and useful neither to artist nor audience. Takes the lack of an avant-garde in the contemporary novel as instancing an internal reason for change, as measured against the other arts, which long ago let go of the representational premise.

B27 “We Are Choking with Shame and Anger.” In *Teach-Ins: U.S.A.: Reports, Opinions, Documents*, edited by Louis Menashe and Ronald Radosh, 345–9. New York: Frederick A.Praeger, 1967. See E1.

The text of an address delivered at a Town Hall “Read-In for Peace,” 20 Feb. 1966. Though renewing a “capacity to feel and to help each other to go on feeling strongly” in the face of despair and a numbing “surplus of information” and provocation is not a “political act” in “a strict or gratifying sense,” neither is it appropriate to compound the “fragility” of the occasion “by a too ready labeling—as rhetoric, as mere gesture, or, even, as an act of protest.” Urges that “indignation” be rejected as a response to the Vietnamese war, for suggesting an “underlying complacency,” because “spiritual grace” and constant self-questioning are required of “a voice that deserves trust.”

B28 “The Aesthetics of Silence.” *Aspen* No. 5–6 (Fall–Winter 1967), sec. 3. See A5e, A8, A18, A26.

The text annotated at A5 differs only slightly from B28. The first three paragraphs of B28 section 5 are collapsed and condensed into one A5 paragraph. Portions of section 8 are also rearranged in A5; likewise, B28 section 20 is split in two, yielding A5 sections 20 and 21.

- B28a* “The Aesthetics of Silence.” In *The Discontinuous Universe: Selected Writings in Contemporary Consciousness*, edited by Sallie Sears and Georgianna W. Lord, 50–75. New York: Basic Books, 1972.  
Reprints the [A5](#) text.
- B28b* “The Aesthetics of Silence.” In *Twentieth Century Criticism: The Major Statements*, edited by William J. Handy and Max Westbrook, 453–73. New York: Free Press, 1974.  
Reprints the [A5](#) text.
- B28c* “Estetica tăcerii.” Trans. (Rom.) George Stănică. *Ateneu* (Bacau) No. 2 (1983).  
Translates segments 1–6 of the [A5](#) text.
- B28d* “Estetica tăcerii.” Trans. (Rom.) George Stănică. *Ateneu* (Bacau) No. 6 (1983):14.  
Translates segments 7–9 of the [A5](#) text.
- B28e* “The Aesthetics of Silence.” In *Women’s Voices: Visions and Perspectives*, edited by Pat C. Hoy II, Esther H. Schor, Robert DiYanni, 363–81. New York: McGraw-Hill, 1990.  
Reprints the [A5](#) text.
- B29* “What’s Happening to America (A Symposium).” *Partisan Review* 34 (Winter 1967):13–82.  
The text annotated at [A5](#) as “What’s Happening in America (1966)” includes two introductory paragraphs describing the *PR* questionnaire that occasioned Sontag’s remarks. Her symposium contribution is found on pp. 51–8.
- B30* “The Pornographic Imagination.” *Partisan Review* 34 (Spring 1967):181–212. See [A2e](#), [A2f](#), [A2i](#), [A7](#), [A8](#), [A18](#), [A21](#).  
The text annotated at [A5](#) adds a few sentences for transition’s sake but is substantially the same as *B30*. (The *B30* header has prompted index references to this as “On Pornography.”)
- B30a* “La imagination pornográfica.” *Revista de Occidente* (Madrid), 2d ser., 19 (Oct. 1967):14–32.  
A Spanish translation of *B30* segments 1, 2, 5, and 6.
- B30b* “L’immaginazione pornografica.” Trans. (Ital.) Ettore Capriolo. *Paragone* (Florence), n.s., No. 34 (Dec. 1967): 37–73.  
Drops the *B30* segmentation scheme and a footnote.
- B30c* “De pornografische verbeelding.” Trans. (Dutch) Theodoor van Vliet. *RAAM* (Utrecht) No. 41 (Jan. 1968): 32–57.
- B30d* “Die pornographische Phantasie I.” Trans. (Ger.) Mark W. Rien. *Akzente* (Munich) 15 (Feb. 1968):77–95.

- Translates [B30](#) segments 1–2 and part of segment 3.
- B30e* “Die pornographische Phantasie II.” Trans. (Ger.) Mark W.Rien. *Akzent* (Munich) 15 (Apr. 1968):169–90.  
Translates the remainder of [B30](#).
- B30f* “Pornografín som litteratur.” Trans. (Swed.) Erik Sandin. *BLM* (Stockholm) 37 (Apr. 1968):252–69.  
Translates [B30](#); the original footnotes are dropped.
- B30g* “The Pornographic Imagination.” In *Perspectives on Pornography*, edited by Douglas A.Hughes, 131–69. New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1970.
- B30h* “Wyobrażenia pornograficzna.” Trans. (Pol.) Ignacy Sieradzki. *Teksty* (Warsaw) No. 2 (1974):36–58.  
Translates the [A5](#) text, abridged by some 35 paragraphs.
- B30i* “Sade y Bataille.” Trans. (Span.) Rafael Vargas. *Revista de la Universidad de Mexico* 32.3–4 (Nov.-Dec. 1977): 86–8.  
Translates segment 4 of the [A5](#) text.
- \*B30j* “The Pornographic Imagination.” In *Story of the Eye*, by Georges Bataille, 83–118. London: Marion Boyars, 1979.  
Reprints the [A5](#) text.
- B30k* “La imaginació pornogràfica.” Trans. (Catalan) Enric Sullà. *Els marges* (Barcelona) No. 21 (1981):3–25.  
Translates the [A5](#) text; the second footnote is dropped.
- B30l* “The Pornographic Imagination.” In *Story of the Eye*, by Georges Bataille, 83–118. Harmondsworth, UK: Penguin, 1982.  
Reprints the [A5](#) text.
- B30m* “Pornografín som litteratur.” Trans. (Swed.) Erik Sandin. In *Ögats historia*, by Georges Bataille, 87–140. Stockholm: Alba, 1983.  
Reprints [B30f](#).
- B30n* “Ima li pornografsko v’obrazhenie?” Trans. (Bulgarian) Dimit’r Zlatarev. *ABV* No. 51 (Dec. 19, 1989):8.  
Translates paragraphs excerpted (presumably) from segments 1 and 6 of the [A5](#) text.
- B30o* “Pornografická fantasie.” [Trans. (Czech) Alena Smutná.] *Vokno* No. 22 (1991):76–82.  
Translates (and slightly abridges) [B30](#) segments 1–3.
- B30p* “Pornografická fantasie: II. část.” Trans. (Czech) Alena Smutná. *Vokno* No. 23 (1991):83–6.  
Translates [B30](#) segments 4–6; drops the segment 4 footnote.
- B31* “Persona.” *Sight and Sound* 36 (Autumn 1967):186–91, 212. See [A8](#).

Annotated at A5 as “Bergman’s *Persona*” A5 segment 2 appears as two segments in B31. A portion of B31 segment 6 appears in A5 segment 3. Most of A5’s last paragraph, comparing Bergman to Godard, is not in B31, nor is the long A5 footnote argument with Richard Corliss.

- B31a “*Persona: The Film in Depth.*” In *Ingmar Bergman: Essays in Criticism*, edited by Stuart M. Kaminsky, 253–69. New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 1975.
- B31b “‘Persona’: The Film in Depth.” In *Great Film Directors*, edited by Leo Braudy and Morris Dickstein, 78–86. New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 1978.  
Reprints B31 segments 3, 5, 6, and 7.
- B31c Excerpts. In *Contemporary Literary Criticism*, Vol. 16, edited by Sharon R. Gunton, 56–7. Detroit: Gale Research, 1981.
- B31d “Tolscha filma.” Trans. (Rus.) Nikolai Paltsev. *Iskusstvo kino* (Moscow) No. 8 (1991):150–5.  
Translates and abridges the B31 text.

B32 Untitled contribution. *¡Viva Che!: Contributions in Tribute to Ernesto ‘Che’ Guevara*, edited by Marianne Alexandre, 106–10. London: Lorrimer, 1968.

Reflects on the death of Che Guevara. Though “Che survives now only in the ‘use’ that will be made of his life and his death,” he must be remembered, not only as the “most unequivocal image of the *humanity* of the world-wide revolutionary struggle,” but also as “a *controversial* figure” whose ideas still count in the struggle “for a revalidation of the Marxist revolutionary tradition” after decades of “traumatic betrayal” by Stalinists and others. In departing Cuba for Bolivia, Che demonstrated a commitment to *internationalism*; in his struggles with Fidel Castro, to establish a “nation-wide militia” (vs. a professional army), to insure “liberty for all tendencies in the arts,” Che likewise demonstrated a commitment to “*democratic* practices.” “Upon these two principles Che formed the core of his revolutionary theory.”

B33 “USA: s vänster och de intellektuella.” *Kommentar* (Stockholm) No. 8 (1968):3–7.

Links intellectuals to revolution because “revolutions begin with ideas.” Identifies the role of the intellectual, historically, as that of the professional communicator and social critic; describes the complex relations of American intellectuals to radical politics, via the rise and fall of the American Communist Party in the 1930s, by reference to the McCarthy period and to the relations of the Old and New Left. Notes the rise of the Goldwater right, the polarization of American politics; the paradox of free speech and cultural containment, of revolutionary anti-intellectualism become pop-consumerism and “psychological” (vs. political) revolutionism. Takes the fragmentariness of political opposition (students vs. workers) as arguing the necessity of “a total criticism of society.”

B34 “Going to the Movies: Godard.” *Partisan Review* 35 (Spring 1968):290–313. See [A8](#), [A18](#).

The text annotated at [A5](#) differs from [B34](#) in having five (vs. four) unnumbered segments. A half paragraph of [B34](#) segment 2 (beginning “Alien to movies...”) is incorporated into [A5](#) segment 1. Otherwise, the four segments of [B34](#) correspond roughly—allowing for added material, typically additional examples—to the last four segments of the reprint.

*B34a* “Chi è Jean Luc Godard?: Due o tre cose che so di lui.” *La fiera letteraria* (Rome), 28 Nov. 1968, 16–8.

An Italian translation of [A5](#) segment 1 and part of segment 2.

*B34b* “Chi è Jean Luc Godard?: Flaubert e Proust non sanno raccontare.” *La fiera letteraria* (Rome), 5 Dec. 1968, 16–8.

Translates the remainder (per [B34a](#)) of [A5](#) segment 2 and most of segment 3.

*B34c* “Chi è Jean Luc Godard?: Tutto si svolge nel presente.” *La fiera letteraria* (Rome) 12 Dec. 1968, 19–20.

Translates parts of [A5](#) segments 3 and 4 and all of segment 5. (Roughly 8 paragraphs are cut from segment 4.)

*B34d* “El cine de Godard.” Trans. (Span.) Edgardo Cozarinsky. *Sur* (Buenos Aires) Nos. 316–317 (Jan.–Apr. 1969): 125–41.

*B34e* “Godard.” In *Great Film Directors: A Critical Anthology*, edited by Leo Braudy and Morris Dickstein, 370–89. New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 1978.

B35 “Perspectives on the Coming Elections.” *Win* (New York) 4.6 (31 Mar. 1968):3–5.

Sees a reawakening of radical consciousness contra the ideology of (capitalist, imperialist) liberalism; defines “radical” as systematic, “political” (vs. simply “moral”) analysis and opposition. Argues that the coming election will confirm the two-party structure, while allowing that which part of the ruling class prevails might make a “concrete” difference. Avers that the price radicals must pay for participation in majority party politics is subscription to “the belief in a divorce between politics and economics.” The role of minority candidates is (thus) to “enlarge the scope” of debate and education. Takes opposition to the Vietnam War *not* as a defense of “democracy” but as opposition to America as “a vast sickening menace to the peace of the world”; takes the question of extralegal methods to be a “tactical” rather than a “formal” issue. Avows that the “task of radicals is twofold: forming effective political groupings and deepening consciousness” in the direction of “long haul” theory.

B36 “Mott ett nytt kulterbegrepp.” Trans. (Swed.) Lars Helander. *BLM* (Stockholm) 37 (May–June 1968):351–3.

Argues for a “new idea of culture” by reference to Marcuse’s critique of repressive (vs. progressive) tolerance; compares Marcuse’s social model (a packed theater) to John Stuart Mill’s (an open market). Puzzles the prospect of a nonrepressive censorship and the question-begging logic that declares real art progressive as if by definition in the absence of a more coherently “positive” account of “revolutionary” culture.

B37 “Trip to Hanoi: Notes on the Enemy Camp.” *Esquire*, Dec. 1968, 131–41, 287–90.

Annotated at [A4](#).

*B37a* “Trip to Hanoi.” In *Journeys: Autobiographical Writings by Women*, edited by Mary Grimley Mason and Carol Hurd Green, 225–8. Boston: G.K.Hall & Co., 1979.  
Reprints the “May 6” segment.

B38 “Some Thoughts on the Right Way (for Us) to Love the Cuban Revolution.” *Ramparts*, Apr. 1969, 6, 10, 14, 16, 18–9.

Comprises three segments.

(1) Compares the Old Left and the New. Where the Old Left “conceived of radical activity from a narrowly ‘political’ point of view,” allowing its members “to continue sharing the tastes, habits and furniture” of the society they attacked, the New Left vision “has been preeminently of a psychic revolution,” an “uncompromising repudiation of the basic cultural norms.” Though this “new American radicalism” is “more intelligent and more sensitive” than the Old Left variety, it is also “more provincial, more excruciatingly American” in that its goal is *freedom* (not justice) defined *individually*, as if (per Adam Smith) “the pursuit of private advantage inexorably leads to public benefit.”

(2) Compares New Left attitudes toward “energy,” “consciousness,” and “discipline” to their Cuban counterparts. Though Americans are impressed by the tremendous energy levels of Cuban life, they are wrong to associate that “liberation” with “private passion,” as “the energies of outraged selves, cheated by the society of their humanity.” “A society in which a revolution has come to power can hardly find reinforcement for revolutionary consciousness in a view which makes ‘society’ the enemy.” Though American radicals are likely to find “most attractive” the Cuban commitment to “a change in consciousness,” they are too prone to see this change in “tourist” terms, as a holiday from (American) overdevelopment—when (cultural) underdevelopment is Cuba’s real problem. Because “Cuban culture lacks any equivalent of the Protestant ethic,” its cultural development has focused energy on the community “primarily through the moralization of *work*” Though the military and ideological forms of discipline involved are likely to arouse mistrust among Americans, they should recognize it as “a reaction (which has been over-generalized) to particular conditions of American society.” Because American visitors to Cuba are likely to be opposition intellectuals, they have a hard time seeing the positively

“pedagogical function” of intellectual work in Cuba and a hard time understanding why Cubans do not share a critical attitude toward American or modernist culture.

(3) Compares the psychic inwardness of American radicalism with the “discovery of new public values” that characterizes the Cuban revolution. Because of Cuba’s “internationalism,” one “feels more in the world” in Havana than “one ever does in such genuinely provincial cities as Rome or Stockholm.” But where Cubans “conceive their task as one of building a history, *forming* consciousness,” Americans see their task as one “of *dismantling* a consciousness, becoming simpler, discharging dead weight.” In the “next stage” of radical development, Americans will need to find a response that is “more political and more disciplined than our present form of mainly cultural warfare.”

*B38a* “Enkelegedachten over de juste manier om van de Cubaanse revolutie te houden (1): De Cubanen zijn minder erotisch geworden.” *Vrij Nederland* (Amsterdam), 19 July 1969, 13.  
A Dutch translation of segment 1 and the first half of segment 2.

*B38b* “Some Thoughts on the Right Way (for Us) to Love the Cuban Revolution.” In *Divided We Stand*, edited by the Editors of *Ramparts*, 164–70. San Francisco: Canfield Press, Harper & Row, 1970.

*B39* “A Letter from Sweden.” *Ramparts*, July 1969, 23–38.

As if replying to a request “to tell about Sweden,” these seventeen (unnumbered) segments anatomize Sontag’s “profound quarrel” with “the quality of Swedish life.”

(1) Details her situation as an independent filmmaker and ponders whether “To go on working in Sweden” against her negative experience of Swedish life—as evidenced in “the vast self-satisfaction” with which Swedes self-critically confirm “the familiar negative clichés about Sweden.” (2) Contrasts American “pride” in (an exportable) “uniqueness” with the passivity and isolation of the Swedes. (3) Describes Swedes as “notably unpsychological” by reference to their general “aversion to reflecting about motives and character,” to their reliance on quantification, to the intense privacy with which Swedes guard their feelings, to their silence in social life and conversation. (4) Takes Swedish silence as evincing a fear of treachery and aggression that is “little short of pathological.”

(5) Takes alcohol’s “mythic” status as “the fundamental metaphor” of national behavior. “Because of the high value placed on restraint, there is a great fear of letting go—and, of course, a vast craving to do just that” via drink. (6) As “their national form of self-rape,” drink rather than sex carries the burden of Swedish guilt. (7) Describes “the general mood” as suspicious or paranoid, as in the

“mania” Swedes have “for locking things up.” (8) Takes “the meagerness” of “institutionalized social life” as “the most obvious symptom” of Swedish anxiety, though the isolated quality of their street manners has advantages for younger women and persecuted minorities. (9) Takes the difficulty of conversation as token of a generalized misanthropy, countered as it may be by “the celebrated Swedish love of nature.” (10) Takes suspicion as “inscribed” bodily in “the famous Swedish ‘clumsiness,’” though most Swedes are very healthy. By contrast with Japanese porn, Sweden’s is plentiful but (degradingly) “anti-erotic.” (11) Sweden’s mediocre cuisine also reveals a deep ambivalence about sensuality. Though Swedes appreciate “refinement and grace [in] manufactured things” and in public environments, the “intensity” of Swedish social life is deficient, which their devotion to nature mostly exacerbates.

(12) Takes Swedish alienation as enabling Swedish egalitarianism, especially as regards government policy on women’s equality. (13) Though materialistic, Swedish society is “uncompetitive without being genuinely cooperative.”

(14) Contrasts the reputed skillfulness of Swedes in mediation and diplomacy to the (obviously mistaken) claim that Sweden is a socialist country; in each case something like “false consciousness” serves positive reformist ends by “neutralizing” ideological strife. (15) Takes Sweden’s “vision of a conflictless society” as so deeply rooted that “New Left” energies “are fed almost exclusively” by a concern with international issues, especially Vietnam. (16) The somewhat arbitrary list of other New Left causes (Africa, Greece, Central America) indicates the lack of a genuinely “unifying cause.” And the Old Left suffers for lack of connection to the international communist movement. (17) Takes “Left politics” as a rival to “nature” in being a “self-alienating” if “respectable” passion among Swedes. Sees the lack of “resentment” among Swedes as evidence of the “dark” “Inner weather” that is a match for their dark winters. Liberation “from their centuries’ old chronic state of depression” will require of Swedes a *real* revolution.

*B39a* “Carta de Suecia.” *Revista de occidente* (Madrid), 2d ser., 28 (Feb. 1970):169–212.

This Spanish translation of [B39](#) arranges its seventeen segments into six.

*B39b* “Sweden: A Few Myths Exploded a Few Clichés Confirmed.” *Nova* (London), Feb. 1970, 76–8, 80, 82–6.

Deletes the “letter” apparatus and most of eleven paragraphs (segments 15–6) regarding the Swedish New Left.

*B39c* “Ein Brief aus Schweden.” [Trans. (Ger.) Ellen Lindemann.] *Monat* (Hamburg), Apr. 1970, 62–81.

Freely translates segments 1–12 of [B39](#); headings are added that reconfigure the original segmentation.

- B39d* “Ein Brief aus Schweden (II.)” Trans. (Ger.) Ellen Lindemann. *Monat* (Hamburg), May 1970, 98–106.  
Translates the last five segments of [B39](#), though headings are added (per [B39c](#)). Sontag’s closing paragraph and “signature” are deleted.
- B39e* “A Letter from Sweden.” *Intellectual Digest* 1.1 (May 1970): 22–8, 150–5.  
Excerpts segments 1–7 of [B39](#); paragraphing is changed and subheads are added.
- B39f* “Ein Brief aus Schweden.” *Tages Anzeiger* (Zurich) No. 22 (4 July 1970):10–9.  
Based on [B39c–d](#) (judging by the headings), [B39f](#) deletes some thirteen [B39](#) paragraphs, mostly from the last half.
- B39g* “A Letter from Sweden.” *Intellectual Digest* 1.2 (July/Aug. 1970):69–76, 131–4. Excerpts segments 8–12 of [B39](#), per [B39e](#).
- B39h* “A Letter from Sweden.” *Intellectual Digest* 1.3 (Sept./Oct. 1970):99–104, 137–45.  
Excerpts segments 13–7 of [B39](#), per [B39e](#).

**B40** “Primitivism.” In *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, Vol. 18, 531–2. Chicago: Encyclopaedia Britannica, 1970.

Distinguishes “chronological” from “cultural” primitivism, especially by reference to various conceptions of “nature.” Discusses Hesiod, Ovid, Lucretius; Greek Cynicism and Roman Stoicism; the Garden of Eden understood as fall (decline) or as (natural) ideal; the idealization (Horace) and (early Christian) demonization of savages; the Medieval Christian combination of chronological antiprimitivism (salvation as progress) and cultural primitivism (antiintellectualism); the Reformation advocacy of primitive Christianity; the cultural primitivism in French (de Sade, Rousseau), German (Novalis, Nietzsche) and English (Wordsworth) Romanticism; social scientific primitivism (Frazer, Freud); primitivism in twentieth-century literature (Lawrence, Artaud) and art (Picasso).

**B41** “Repuesta de Susan Sontag.” Trans. (Span.) Juan Goytisolo. *Libre* (Paris) No. 4 (1972):83–101.

Annotated at [A9](#) as *Bijgedachten over de bevrijding van de vrouw*, though the first section of [A9](#) combines the [B41](#) prologue with the first of the original’s ten numbered (and somewhat repetitious) questions, to which Sontag’s meditations on class and sex stand as replies. Several passages from [B41](#)—involving the sexism/chattel slavery analogy, the infantilism attributed to femininity, men’s disrespect for women and women’s work, the hegemonic power of straight white males in advanced societies—do not appear in [A9](#).

- B41a* “Réflexions sur la libération des femmes (réponses à un questionnaire).” Trans. (Fr.) Gérard Durand. *Les temps modernes* 29 (Dec. 1972):907–44.  
Though substantially the same as [A9](#), [B41a](#) introduces passages *not* found in [B41](#)—regarding feminist opposition to fascism, the Black Panther party, the depiction of women in Maost cinema. Most crucially, [B41a](#) poses the prologue question for the first time, and includes an explanatory headnote identifying the original publication venue, mistakenly, as *Libre* No. 3.
- B41b* “The Third World of Women.” *Partisan Review* 40 (Summer 1973):181–206.  
The explanatory headnote of [B41a](#) is expanded here, by contrasting feminism in Latin America to its American manifestation. A long passage is added to this version comparing Hannah Arendt and Isak Dinesen. [B41](#) passages lacking from [B41a](#) are also absent here.
- B41c* “Manner als Kolonialherren Frauen als Eingeborene: Zur Struktur des Sexismus.” Trans. (Ger.) Alice Schwarzer. *Neues Forum* (Vienna), Mar. 1973, 31–3.  
A very free translation and abridgment of (presumably) [B41](#). The questions that structure [B41](#) are dropped, replaced by thematic subheadings. Passages from questions 5, 7, 9, and 10 are dropped altogether.
- B41d* “Entrevista a Susan Sontag.” In *El feminismo: Nuevos conceptos*, edited by Ana Fernández et al., 17–66. Medellín, Colombia: Ediciones Hombre Nuevo, n.d. [1975?].
- [B42](#) “On Paul Goodman.” *New York Review of Books*, 21 Sept. 1972, 10, 12. See [E17](#).  
As annotated at [A15](#), except some dates are corrected (“twenty years ago” in [B42](#) becomes “eighteen years ago” in [A15](#)) and [B42](#) segments 2 and 3 are combined in [A15](#).
- B42a* “En memoria de Paul Goodman.” Trans. (Span.) Flora Botton Burlá. *Plural* (Mexico, D.F.) 2.6 (Feb. 1973): 10–1.
- B42b* Excerpts. In *Contemporary Literary Criticism*, Vol. 2, edited by Carolyn Riley and Barbara Harte, 170. Detroit: Gale Research, 1974.
- B42c* Excerpts. In *Modern American Literature*, 4th. ed., Vol. 4, A Library of Literary Criticism, edited by Dorothy Nyren, Maurice Kramer, and Elaine Fialka Kramer, 198–9. New York: Frederick Ungar Publishing Co., 1976.

B42d Excerpts. In *Twentieth-Century American Literature*, Vol. 3, The Chelsea House Library of Literary Criticism, edited by Harold Bloom, 1638. New York, 1987.

B43 “The Double Standard of Aging.” *Saturday Review*, 23 Sept. 1972, 29–38.

In the second of B43’s four (unnumbered) segments, Sontag describes aging as “a movable doom. It is a crisis that never exhausts itself.... Being a crisis of the imagination rather than of ‘real life,’ it has the habit of repeating itself again and again.” The essay’s agenda mimes this repetition, nearly every iteration adding some new and summary-defying inflection.

(1) Begins with a parable, in which a woman is asked her age, which prompts various comparisons: of the way aging, by means of the cultural “double standard” that empowers or values “masculine” abilities or traits more than “feminine” capacities, “afflicts women much more than men”; of how aging differs as between pre- and post-industrial societies; of how the experience of aging differs from country to country and across classes: “Aging is much more a social judgment than a biological eventuality.”

(2) Adduces changing perceptions of the heroine in Strauss’s opera *Der Rosenkavalier* to suggest that “The *form* in which women experience their lives,” as a repeatable crisis of perception, remains unchanged and has the effect, via the double standard, of cheating women “of those years, between thirty-five and fifty, likely to be the best of their sexual life.” Because “sexual attractiveness” is identified with youth, “To be a woman is to be an actress,” is to be encouraged to indulge in a narcissistic regard for “image,” which renders girls unfit “for first class adulthood.” Because women are subject to a “double standard” that separates “face” from “body,” “the esthetic standards for women are much higher, and narrower, than those proposed for men,” especially when those standards, “beauty” for faces, “desirability” for bodies, are potentially in conflict, or when “beauty” is associated with a lack of “change.”

(3) Notes that women have a single standard of beauty, “the *girl*,” while men have two, “the *boy* and the *man*” Thus “Aging in women is a process of becoming obscene sexually.” This “visceral horror felt at aging female flesh”—evident in the way couples of distant ages are judged differently when the woman is the older partner—functions like a “racial taboo,” authorizing oppression by declaring that “women are to remain in a state of permanent ‘minority.’”

(4) Proposes that awareness of the double standard and of women’s (understandable) acquiescence in it is a necessary step in the struggle “of all women to be treated (and treat themselves) as full human beings.” Rather than deny their age, “Women should allow their faces to show the lives they have lived. Women should tell the truth.”

B43a “The Double Standard of Aging.” *Cosmopolitan*, Mar. 1973, 208, 210–1, 221–3.

- Abridges [B43](#); many paragraphs are deleted, and its four segments are reduced to three by combining the last two.
- B43b* “Have You Lied About Your Age Today?” *Nova* (London), Sept. 1973, 40–8.  
Abridges [B43](#), its four segments becoming a continuous text punctuated by sidebar quotations and photos from British newspapers illustrating Sontag’s argument.
- B43c* “The Double Standard of Aging.” In *No Longer Young: The Older Woman In America*, edited by Pauline B. Bart et al., 31–9. Ann Arbor: Institute of Gerontology, Univ. of Michigan, 1975.  
Reprints most of segment 1 of [B43](#), roughly half of segment 2, and one paragraph from segment 4.
- B43d* “The Double Standard of Aging.” In *Psychology of Women: Selected Readings*, edited by Juanita H. Williams, 462–78. New York: W.W.Norton & Co.; Toronto: George J. McLeod, 1979.
- B43e* “Las mujeres: Un doble patrón para envejecer.” Trans. (Span.) Sara Sefchovich. *Fem.* (Mexico, D.F.) 6.24 (Aug.–Sept. 1982): 10–20.  
Translates and abridges (by some nine paragraphs) [B43](#).
- B44* “Photography.” *New York Review of Books*, 18 Oct. 1973, 59–63. Annotated at [A12](#) as “In Plato’s Cave,” though [B44](#) is quite different. Its ten segments become six in [A12](#). Many brief passages are added to the [A12](#) text, some resonantly aphoristic (“To collect photographs is to collect the world”). Two extended passages of [A12](#) are also not in [B44](#), one comparing Vertov to Hitchcock, the other paraphrasing Mallarmé to the effect that “everything exists to end in a photograph.”
- B44a* “On Photography.” *Mainliner Magazine* (Los Angeles), Aug. 1978, 43–5, 71.  
Abridges the [A12](#) text.
- B44b* “Puraton no doukutsude.” Trans. (Jap.) K. Kondou. *Trends* 45 (1979):8–14.  
Translates and abridges the [A12](#) text.
- B44c* “Susan Sontag: Un traité sur la ‘philosophie’ de la photo.” *Photo* (Paris) No. 142 (July 1979):100–2, 104.  
A French translation (prepared for [A12f](#)) of segments 1–2 and part of segment 3 of the [A12](#) text.
- B44d* “Susan Sontag: Un traité sur la ‘philosophie’ de la photo.” *Photo* (Paris) No. 143 (Aug. 1979):17–9, 112–4.

- Prints the rest of the Seuil version of “In Plato’s Cave.”
- B44e* “La photographie.” Trans. (Fr.) Gérard-Henri Durand and Guy Durand. *Lire magazine* (Paris) No. 49 (Sept. 1979): 117–26. Translates segments 3, 4, and (slightly abbreviated) 5 of the [A12](#) text, as prepared for [A12f](#).
- B44f* “Att fotografera.” Trans. (Swed.) Lena Johannesson. In *Folklig och kommersiell konst: En antologi*, edited by Bengt Jacobsson et al., 142–50. Stockholm: Norstedt, 1980. Translates segments 3, 5, and 6 of the [A12](#) text.
- B44g* “O fotografii.” Trans. (Pol.) Sławomir Magala. *Odra* (Warsaw) No. 7–8 (July–Aug. 1981):36–9. Translates the [A12](#) introductory note, and segments 1–2 and portions of segments 3 and 5 of “In Plato’s Cave” (the latter segment reporting Sontag’s 1945 encounter with Holocaust photographs).
- B44h* “Narkomani obrazu.” Trans. (Pol.) Sławomir Magala. *Fotografia* (Warsaw) No. 2 (1983):1–3. Translates, less a few paragraphs, [A12](#) segments 4–6.
- B44i* “Something Went Dead; Something Is Still Crying.” In *The Harper American Literature*, Vol. 2, edited by Donald McQuade et al., 2576. New York: Harper & Row, 1987. Reprints the passage describing Sontag’s 1945 response to photographs from Bergen-Belsen and Dachau.
- B44j* “Sobre la fotografía.” *APSI* (Santiago) No. 281 (1988): xiv. Translates four paragraphs of [A12](#) segment 3 discussing the photography-family-tourism nexus.
- B44k* “In Plato’s Cave.” In *Women’s Voices: Visions and Perspectives*, edited by Pat C.Hoy II, Esther H.Schor, and Robert DiYanni, 349–59. New York: McGraw-Hill, 1990. Reprints the [A12](#) text.
- B44l* “On Photography.” In *Anthology: Selected Essays from Thirty Years of The New York Review of Books*, 93–112. New York: NYREV, n.d. [1993.]
- B44m* “On Photography.” In *The First Anthology: 30 Years of The New York Review of Books*, edited by Robert B.Silvers, Barbara Epstein, and Rea S.Hederman, 127–39. New York: New York Review of Books, 1993.
- B44n* “Something Went Dead; Something Is Still Crying.” In *The Harper American Literature*, 2d ed., Vol. 2, edited by Donald McQuade et al., 2181. New York: Harper-CollinsCollegePublishers, 1993. Reprints [B44i](#).

B45 “Freak Show.” *New York Review of Books*, 15 Nov. 1973, 13–9.

The text annotated at A12 as “America, Seen Through Photographs, Darkly” differs considerably from B45, which ran as a review of books about Walker Evans and Diane Arbus. The fifteen unnumbered segments of B45 become six in A12. The first four A12 segments correspond roughly to the first ten of B45. A paragraph-length bio of Diane Arbus in B45 segment 5 is dropped from A12, a comparison of an Arbus photograph to one by Lartigue is added to A12 segment 3. References to Lewis Hine are added to A12; a B45 footnote reference to Paul Strand and D.W.Griffith is not in A12. The book’s segments 5–6 drop other biographical data about Arbus. A12’s last segment (drawing material from segments 14–15 of B45) is substantially revised, especially as regards the political implications of Arbus’s emphasis on “sameness.” Material from “Shooting America” (B46) is added to A12 segment 6.

- B45a* “Amerika im Spiegel von Photographien, dunkel.” Trans. (Ger.) Hans-Horst Henschen. *Akzente* (Munich) 23 (Dec. 1976):556–75.  
This translation draws from *both* the B45 and A12 texts.
- B45b* “On Photography: America, Seen Through Photographs, Darkly.” In *The Norton Anthology of American Literature*, Vol. 2, edited by Ronald Gottesman et al., 2236–50. New York: W.W.Norton & Co., 1979.  
Reprints the A12 text, with editorial footnotes.
- B45c* “America, Seen Through Photographs, Darkly.” In *Photography in Print: Writings from 1816 to the Present*, edited by Vicki Goldberg, 506–20. New York: Simon & Schuster, 1981.  
Reprints the A12 text.
- B45d* “Ameryka wylania się z wolna z za fotograffi.” Trans. (Pol.) Sławomir Magala. *Miesięcznik literacki* (Warsaw) No. 9 (Sept. 1983):79–88.  
Translates the A12 text.
- B45e* “America, Seen Through Photographs, Darkly.” In *The Harper American Literature*, Vol. 2, edited by Donald McQuade et al., 2160–72. New York: Harper & Row, 1987.  
Reprints the A12 text, with editorial footnotes.
- B45f* “America, Seen Through Photographs, Darkly.” In *Photography in Print: Writings from 1816 to the Present*, edited by Vicki Goldberg, 506–20. Albuquerque: Univ. of New Mexico Press, 1988.  
Reprints the A12 text.

B46 “Shooting America.” *New York Review of Books*, 18 Apr. 1974, 17–24. See [A21](#).

The text annotated at [A12](#) as “Melancholy Objects” differs considerably from [B46](#), which appeared as a portmanteau review of seven photography books. [B46](#) has fifteen segments arranged into three numbered sections; the [A12](#) text has six unnumbered segments. Apart from a long passage evoking Baudelaire’s *flâneur* in [A12](#) segment 2, the first three parts of the book version correspond to the first seven [B46](#) segments. The material derived from [B46](#) segment 9 is much augmented, in [A12](#) segment 4, by lengthy reference to Henry James and Clarence John Laughlin. [A12](#) segment 5 corresponds roughly to [B46](#) segments 11–4. Passages on the surrealistically nostalgic appeal of photography are much augmented in [A12](#) by examples lacking from (some replacing examples in) [B46](#) segment 11. Language from [B46](#) segment 14 (about “a particular melancholy in the American photographic project”) appears in “America, Seen Through Photographs, Darkly”; remaining language from that segment is shuffled with language from [B46](#) segment 13 to conclude [A12](#) segment 5. Better than half of the material in [A12](#) segment 6 is new matter, much of it adducing Walter Benjamin; the [B46](#) passages focus less than those in [A12](#) on the destruction of temporal or historical, hence ethical and conceptual, experience. Several [B46](#) footnotes are dropped from [A12](#).

- B46a* Excerpt. *Time*, 26 Dec. 1977, 66.  
Prints the paragraph from [A12](#) segment 6 that begins with the claim that “Photography inevitably entails a certain patronizing of reality.”
- B46b* “Shooting America.” In *American Photography: A Critical History 1945 to the Present*, by Jonathan Green, 192. New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1984.  
Reproduces the first page of [B46](#).

B47 People Are Talking about... (“Susan Sontag Tells How It Feels to Make a Movie”). *Vogue*, July 1974, 84, 118–9.

Compares filmmaking to writing. The latter, in “taking a direct route between one’s plans and their execution,” is “an inside job,” relying on a nineteenth-century machine (a typewriter). Making a film requires more modern machines, and involves “being dependent on and trying to be smart about uncontrollable capricious elements,” among them actors, weather, money. Writing is “an act of the will”; a filmmaker “presides” over “accidents.” Sees *Promised Lands*, despite genre expectations, as her “most personal film” due to the material’s “uncanny fit with themes in [her] writing and other films.” That the reality she “ran after” was “mostly the reality that [she] already understood” is a sad and puzzling paradox. Objects to the fiction/documentary distinction because “documentary,” understood by analogy with journalistic reporting, is “too narrow.” More

analytical models of nonfiction writing are equally possible: “the poem, the essay, and the lamentation.” Sees *Promised Lands* as seeking (after Brecht’s epic theater) to “represent,” truthfully if partially, “a condition, rather than an action,” a mental as well as a physical and political landscape.

B48 “Photography: The Beauty Treatment.” *New York Review of Books*, 28 Nov. 1974, 35–9. See [A21](#).

Annotated at [A12](#) as “The Heroism of Vision,” though the [A12](#) text is longer. The twelve segments of [B48](#) become four segments in [A12](#). A long discussion of the relation of painting and photography near the end of [A12](#) segment 2 is not in [B48](#); [A12](#) segment 3 (especially the material corresponding to [B48](#) segment 11) is much more expansive than the original on the relations of words, meanings, and photographs.

*B48a* “Heroizm widzenia.” Trans. (Pol.) Sławomir Magala. *Fotografia* (Warsaw) No. 1 (1982):1–3.  
Translates segments 1–2 of the [A12](#) text.

B49 “Notes on Optimism.” With David Rieff. *Vogue*, Jan. 1975, 100, 148, 154.

Replies to a query about “reasons for optimism” in eight (unnumbered) “notes.” (1–2) Denies the optimism/pessimism antinomy by claiming that pessimism is “our peculiarly ‘modern’ way of staying optimistic,” that modern pessimism is “the status quo’s best friend” by contrast with “classic” pessimists like Beckett and Francis Bacon. (3–5) Claims that hopelessness results from “a slothful ahistoricism.” A “more humane life” in the making is (antithetically) evidenced by “a real rise in the quality, intensity, and integrity of community” in China, North Vietnam, and Cuba and by “heroic struggles undertaken on behalf of tolerance” in countries like the United States where “respect” is accorded to minority and adversary “indignation.” Other hopeful signs include the debate over “cruel and unusual punishment” as well as the increasing number of women with “some chance of leading autonomous lives.” (6–8) Assails the defeatist logic of pessimism. Sontag and Rieff take the secular counterpart of “faith” (in the continuity of past, present, and future) to be “will,” as evidenced in actions. Though imagining the worst, “we must act no less honorably than if the future were assured.”

B50 “Fascinating Fascism.” *New York Review of Books*, 6 Feb. 1975, 23–30. See [A18](#).

The chapter annotated at [A15](#) differs considerably from [B50](#). The latter has eighteen segments, the first thirteen designated as part 1, the last five as part 2. [A15](#) combines segments and paragraphs (so that part 1 has three segments, part 2 but one). Moreover, a number of deletions, additions, and rearrangements are evident. A [B50](#) plot-summary of *The Blue Light*, derived from Siegfried Kracauer (see [G44](#)), is not in [A15](#). Added to the [A15](#) text are several notes expanding on the history of Riefenstahl’s relations with the Nazi regime. Added also is a long passage describing the misogynist and fascist element of Nuba culture and

another passage, comprising most of the last two paragraphs of the [A15](#) part 1, critiquing the lack of historical perspective that allows Riefenstahl's fans to indulge in "continuing trade-offs between the formalist approach and camp taste," practices no longer acceptable now that fascist art has become "mass culture."

- B50a* "Verzückt von den Primitiven: Leni Riefenstahl und die bleibende Faszination faschistischer Kunst." Trans. (Ger.) Mark W. Rien. *Die Zeit* (Hamburg), 2 May 1975, 17–8. Translates segments 7–9 of [B50](#) part 1.
- B50b* "Verzückt von den Primitiven (II): Der Ekstase der Gemeinschaft: Leni Riefenstahl oder die anhaltende Faszination faschistischer Kunst." Trans. (Ger.) Mark W. Rien. *Die Zeit* (Hamburg), 9 May 1975, 22–3. Translates segments 10–3 of [B50](#) part 1.
- B50c* "Fascinating Fascism." In *Movies and Methods*, edited by Bill Nichols, 31–43. Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 1976. Reprints part 1 of [B50](#).
- B50d* "La fascinación del fascismo." *Nueva política* (Mexico, D.F.) No. 1 (Jan.–Mar. 1976):261–81. A Spanish translation of [B50](#).
- B50e* "Fascinating Fascism." In *Women and the Cinema: A Critical Anthology*, edited by Karyn Kay and Gerald Peary, 352–76. New York: E.P. Dutton & Co.; Toronto: Clarke, Irwin & Co., 1977.
- B50f* "Fascination du fascisme." Trans. (Fr.) Robert Louit. *Magazine littéraire* (Paris) No. 120 (Jan. 1977):70–4. Translates and abridges [B50](#) part 1.
- B50g* "Fascynujący faszyzm." Trans. (Pol.) Sławomir Magala. *Pismo literacko-artystyczne* (Krakow) No. 4 (1984): 142–9. Translates roughly the second half of [A15](#) part 1.
- B50h* "Olympia." *Filmviews* (Carlton, Australia) 30.123 (Autumn 1985):41. Excerpts [B50](#) part 1.
- B50i* "Magicheskij fascism." Trans. (Rus.) N. Tzirkin. *Iskusstvo kino* (Moscow) No. 6 (1991):50–7. Freely translates the [A15](#) text.
- B50j* "Fascinující fašismus." Trans. (Czech) Martin Weiss. *Revolver revue* (Prague) No. 20 (1992):192–217. Translates and slightly abridges the [A15](#) text.

*B51* "Francis Bacon: 'About Being in Pain.'" *Vogue*, Mar. 1975, 136–7.

Notes the risk of being understood “too well” that Bacon, in “the obsessional coherence” of his work, seems prone to. Takes his efforts to falsify the chronological record—to the effect that he started painting at age thirty—as betokening the “psychological and artistic truth” that Bacon was “a late developer.” He can weather the storms of acclaim because he is “sufficiently cultivated, complex, and hidden as a human being.” Less English than European, less contemporary than traditional, Bacon is “the only contemporary who has affiliations with the heroic figures of Western painting: Michelangelo, Titian, Rembrandt, Goya.” Where modern painting values self-conscious “intelligence,” Bacon’s intelligent paintings are less “about” intelligence than “‘about’ being in pain.”

B52 “A Woman’s Beauty: Put-Down or Power Source?” *Vogue*, Apr. 1975, 118–9.

Compares the Greek view of beauty, as applying to “whole persons,” to the Christian, which limits excellence to “moral virtue only” and beauty exclusively to women. The consequent devaluing of women is seen in the way “beauty encourages narcissism, reinforces dependence and immaturity.” Because contemporary standards teach women “to see their bodies *in parts*,” the obligation of beauty is “a form of self-oppression.” Though beauty’s power is real, it is self-negating for being passive and “superficial.” To escape this “trap” requires distance enough “to see how much beauty itself has been abridged in order to prop up the mythology of the ‘feminine.’”

B52a “La belleza, ¿handicap o poder?” [Trans. (Span.) Gerga Schattenberg-Rincón.] *Eco* (Bogota) 41.2 (June 1982): 113–6.

B52b “A Woman’s Beauty: Put Down or Power Source?” In *Women’s Voices: Visions and Perspectives*, edited by Pat C.Hoy II, Esther H.Schor, and Robert DiYanni, 359–61. New York: McGraw-Hill, 1990.

B53 “Beauty: How Will It Change Next?” *Vogue*, May 1975, 116–7, 174.

Comprises two unnumbered segments. (1) Notes how seductively powerful ideas—freedom, beauty—are “basically self-contradictory.” Seemingly natural, given, beauty is essentially historical, artificial; in being “exceptional,” a beautiful woman embodies “a norm.” In opposing “beautiful” to “common,” “Beauty is a class system” only reinforced by endless changes of fashion. Consumerism accelerates change and lowers or democratizes standards, as evidenced in the decline of fashion authority (from Garbo to Grace Kelly) accorded to actresses. Yet even the “natural” look is “a form of theater.” That beauty is an “ideology” is evident by its absence in China and the retrograde form it takes in the Soviet Union. (2) Declares beauty a “myth” especially oppressive to women “because it is exclusively associated with *them*.” Signs of change include the trend toward androgynous beauty in males (though David Bowie’s

“masculine narcissism” is a matter of choice) and the feminist claim that “women are beautiful.” Notes that the “feminist critique surfaced” in the 1960s when “the richest and most central notion was ‘style,’” understood as “a *plurality* of styles.” Thus “good news” for women is “good news for esthetes and sensualists as well.”

B54 People Are Talking about...(“Women: Can Rights Be Equal?”). *Vogue*, July 1976, 100–1.

Anatomizes America’s case of reactionary nerves at the prospect of approving the Equal Rights Amendment after an exhausting decade of cultural change, an exhaustion measurable by the fact that the ERA, once condemned as “reformist” by some feminists, is now “a front line of struggle.” Cautions against attaching “too many expectations” to the ERA, yet urges that “even the affirmation of the *potential* equality of women and men is still a radical thought” for leading to other concepts: independence, power, autonomy. Agrees that campaigning for “the rights of women” is “unfeminine,” as well it should be given that “current definitions of femininity are predicated on...inequality.” Rights can be equal only after “the de-definition of women and men.” America’s nervousness indicates that “It will happen; it is happening.”

B55 “Susan Sontag.” In *Photography within the Humanities*, edited by Eugenia Parry Janis and Wendy MacNeil, 110–21. Danbury, NH: Addison House, 1977.

Comprises a (transcribed) symposium talk and a question/answer session.

The talk urges several of the leading themes of A12 (that “photographic seeing” is a “peculiarly modern” phenomenon, that it encourages “a fundamentally appropriative relationship to reality”) while addressing the question, implicit in the symposium title, of photography’s place in the university, a question often asked in the (mystifying, yet productive) form of whether photography is an art. Takes the “study” of photography as a matter of “looking” at (vs. taking) photos. Because photography is a “meta-art,” a “place where all kinds of sociological and moral and historical questions can be raised,” it might have “a central place” within the humanities.

In the question-and-answer session Sontag continues to ring changes on A12 themes or examples (she mentions the contrast between watching an operation in person and on film, discusses photography’s native propensity for surrealism, the leveling of interest or beauty) but some of the material is unusual. In discussing her status as “a photograph junkie” Sontag describes her habit of cutting photos out of magazines; later, in discussing how photographs shock and anesthetize, she compares paintings (which one finds in a museum, a place one must go to) and photographs (which “come to you,” often in magazines). In observing that the number of potential photographs is “unlimited,” she also avers to feeling that, for a given writer, “There are not an unlimited number of things to write.” Finds it “sad” (and beside the point) that people want “to be told whether photography is okay or not.” Exemplifies the moral complexity of photography by reference to Avedon photos of Vietnamese napalm victims. Adduces the

photographs she picked for the exhibition (some of which illustrate the published talk) as exemplifying her tastes, “hard edge[d],” “upsetting.”

B56 “Photography in Search of Itself.” *New York Review of Books*, 20 Jan. 1977, 53–9.

Annotated at A12 as “Photographic Evangels.” Though B56 comprises nineteen segments in two numbered sections and the A12 text has six unnumbered segments, the essay and the chapter are, in the A12 context, untypically alike. A12 segment 6, however, is new matter entirely.

B56a “La fotografía como un fin en sí mismo.” *Revista de la Universidad de México* 31.9 (May 1977):1–14.

A Spanish translation of B56.

B56b “La photographie à la recherche d’elle même.” Trans. (Fr.) Gérard-Henri Durand. *Le Nouvel Observateur* (Paris), hors série, No. 1 (June 1977):8, 11–2, 16.

Translates and abridges part 1 of B56.

B56c “La fotografía en busca de sí misma.” Trans. (Span.) Carmen Criado. *Revista de occidente* (Madrid), 3d ser., Nos. 20–21 (June–July 1977):18–39.

B56d “Photography in Search of Itself.” In *The Camera Viewed: Writings on Twentieth-Century Photography*. Vol. 2, *Photography after World War II*, edited by Peninah R. Petruck, 213–37. New York: E.P.Dutton; Toronto: Clarke, Irwin & Co., 1979.

B56e “Sens fotografii.” Trans. (Pol.) Sławomir Magala. *Sztuka* (Warsaw) No. 3 (1979):11–3.

Translates the first fourteen paragraphs of the A12 text.

B56f “Question de mots, question de goûts.” Trans. (Fr.) Gérard H. Durand and Guy Durand. *Le Nouvel Observateur* (Paris), hors série, No. 6, “Special Photo” (June 1979): [36, 38].

Reprints four of the first five paragraphs equivalent to A12 segment 5 per the A12f French text.

B57 “Photography Unlimited.” *New York Review of Books*, 23 June 1977, 25–32. See A18.

The version annotated at A12 as “The Image-World” is unusually faithful to B57. Where B57 has sixteen segments organized into four numbered parts, the A12 text has five unnumbered segments, the first three corresponding to B57 parts 1–3. The last segment of B57 part 4 becomes the fifth segment of the A12 text.

B57a “Świat obrazów.” Trans. (Pol.) Sławomir Magala. *Kino* (Warsaw) 16.4 (Apr. 1981):17–22.

Translates the [A12](#) text.

*B57b* “Svet’ t na obrazite.” *S’vremenna zhurnalistika* No. 2 (1988): 41–60.

A Bulgarian translation of the [A12](#) text.

*B58* “Illness as Metaphor” *New York Review of Books*, 26 Jan. 1978, 10–6. See [E26](#).

Annotated as the introduction and sections 1–4 of [A13](#). A number of [B58](#) footnotes are dropped from [A13](#); another is incorporated into the [A13](#) text; two appear in [A13](#) for the first time. Apart from sentence-level revisions, the most emphatic difference between the two versions of “Illness as Metaphor” comes at the end of [B58](#) section 3, language from which (involving the “interesting” aspect of sickness) is shifted in the [A13](#) version to section 4. The last half of the last paragraph of [A13](#) section 4 is also new matter.

*B58a* “Choroba jako metafora.” Trans. (Pol.) Jerzy Siemasz. *Kultura* (Warsaw) No. 38 (17 Sept. 1978):2, 15.

Translates and abridges [B58](#).

*B58b* “Illness as Metaphor.” *Cancer News* (Winter 1979):6–8.

Reprints excerpts from the introduction and sections 1, 2, 8, and 9 of [A13](#).

*B58c* “Una parola inguaribile.” *L’europo* (Milan) No. 39 (27 Sept. 1979):75–9.

Prints sections 1 and 3 of (we presume) [A13f](#). See [B60](#).

*B58d* “Illness as Metaphor.” In *The Lexington Introduction to Literature: Reading and Responding to Texts*, edited by Gary Waller, Kathleen McCormick, and Lois Josephs Fowler, 1223–32. Lexington, MA: D.C.Heath & Co., 1987.

Reprints [A13](#) sections 1–3 and part of section 9.

*B58e* “Illness as Metaphor.” In *Text Book: An Introduction to Literary Language*, edited by Robert Scholes, Nancy R. Comley, and Gregory L.Ulmer, 96–102. New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1988.

Reprints [A13](#) section 1 and portions of section 8.

*B58f* “Choroba jako metafora.” Trans. (Pol.) Roman Czarny. *Pismo literacko-artystyczne* (Krakow) No. 1 (1989): 96–110.

Translates [A13](#) sections 1 and 9, though the section 9 translation is of the *revised* section 9, per [A13p](#).

*B59* “Images of Illness.” *New York Review of Books*, 9 Feb. 1978, 27–9.

Annotated as [A13](#) sections 5–7. Several [B59](#) footnotes are not in [A13](#); some [B59](#) footnote matter is incorporated into the [A13](#) text. Two long [B59](#) footnotes

become a single [A13](#) note. The most emphatic revision is the inclusion in [A13](#) section 6 of seven stanzas from W.H.Auden's "Miss Gee."

- B59a* "Krankheit als Metapher." Trans (Ger.) Karin Kersten and Caroline Neubaur. *Die schwarze Botin* (Berlin) No. 8 (Sept. 1978):3–9.  
Translates [A13](#) chapters 7 and 8, per [A13a](#).
- B59b* "Choroba jako metafora (2)." Trans. (Pol.) Jerzy Siemasz. *Kultura* (Warsaw) No. 39 (24 Sept. 1978):6.
- B59c* "Metaforika bolesti." [Trans. (Serbo-Croat.) Maja Soljan.] *Gordogan* (Zagreb) No. 4 (1979):72–82.
- B59d* "Illness as Metaphor." *Harpers and Queen* (London), Mar. 1979, 141, 208.  
This excerpt comprises language drawn from [A13](#) sections 7–9; the last four paragraphs of section 7, paragraphs 8–12, 15, and 22 of section 8, and paragraphs 16–7 and 20 of section 9.

*B60* "Disease as Political Metaphor." *New York Review of Books*, 23 Feb. 1978, 29–33.

Annotated as [A13](#) sections 8 and 9. Some [B60](#) notes are cut entirely; two (on Lewis Thomas, on science-fiction mutation stories) are incorporated into the [A13](#) text; another note (on disease metaphors in planning and housing rhetoric) is added to [A13](#) section 9. Discussion of the "war" metaphor in [A13](#) section 8 is more expansive than in the [B60](#) text. (See [A13p](#) regarding subsequent revision of material derived from [B60](#).)

- \*\*\* "Krankheit als Metapher." Trans (Ger.) Karin Kersten and Caroline Neubaur. *Die schwarze Botin* (Berlin) No. 8 (Sept. 1978):2–9.  
See [B59a](#).
- B60a* "Bolest kao politička metafora." [Trans. (Serbo-Croat.) Maja Soljan.] *Gordogan* (Zagreb) No. 4 (1979):83–97.
- \*\*\* "Illness as Metaphor." *Cancer News* (Winter 1979):6–8.  
See [B58b](#).
- \*\*\* "Illness as Metaphor." *Harpers and Queen* (London), Mar. 1979, 141, 208.  
See [B59d](#).
- \*\*\* "Il male al servizio della politica: Quell'invettiva l'ho usata anch'io." *L'europeo* (Milan) No. 39 (27 Sept. 1979):78.  
See [B58c](#).
- \*\*\* "Illness as Metaphor." In *The Lexington Introduction to Literature: Reading and Responding to Texts*, edited by Gary

Waller, Kathleen McCormick, and Lois Josephs Fowler, 1232–6. Lexington, MA: D.C.Heath and Company, 1987.

See [B58d](#).

\*\*\* “Illness as Metaphor.” In *Text Book: An Introduction to Literary Language*, edited by Robert Scholes, Nancy R. Comley, and Gregory L.Ulmer, 96–102. New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1988.

See [B58e](#).

\*\*\* “Choroba jako metafora.” Trans. (Pol.) Roman Czarny. *Pismo literacko-artystyczne* (Krakow) No. 1 (1989): 96–110.

See [B58f](#).

B61 “Looking with Avedon.” *Vogue*, Sept. 1978, 461, 507–8.

Ponders the “often indirect” relation between heeding fashion and following it, especially when fashion “transposes the erotic into an image” and thus becomes, as in Avedon, “a way of seeing” that is “disinterested, often ironic.” Though “naming” a fashion reduces it to a transient “style,” styles “can be scheduled for a number of posthumous appearances” hence “cherished in a fresh way.” Defines fashion as the successive generation of opposites or complements; charts shifts in fashion by reference to shifts in Avedon’s fashion photographs—to the effect that “The gestures that create or inspire fashions are defined by the camera.” Once a matter of behavior, fashion is now concerned “almost exclusively” with appearances. Fashion photography epitomizes photography tout court, for being simultaneously “timeless” (perfection is recorded) and “dated” (as fashions change). Hence pictures that began as fashion photographs inevitably become commentaries on “the idea of the fashionable.”

B62 What’s News, What’s Coming: Events (“‘Our Hitler,’ A Masterpiece from Germany”). *Vogue*, May 1980, 256, 325.

Declares that “Movies have never been worse”—and this despite Syberberg’s *Hitler, A Film from Germany*, “one of the great works of art of this century.” Defends the film’s seven-hour length, demanded no less by the magnitude of its subject (the holocaust) than by the aesthetic “generosity” and “ambition” of its epic form: “Syberberg’s idea is to exhaust, to empty his subject—to offer as many perspectives as possible.” Though he begins with “the old-fashioned” view of Nazism “as the explosion of the German demonic,” his real subject is less the “Hitler-that-was” than “the image of Hitler” and our current response to it, thus to “transcend” by “passionate conviction” the “primal opposition” between “fiction and documentary” that “has dominated the history of cinema.” “Perhaps there is hope for the movies still.”

B63 “Remembering Barthes.” *New York Review of Books*, 5 May 1980, 21–2. See [A26](#).

As annotated at [A15](#), though the five [B63](#) segments appear in [A15](#), untypically, as continuous text.

- B63a* “Wspomnienie o Barthesie.” Trans. (Pol.) Sławomir Magala. *Literatura na świecie* (Warsaw) No. 8 (Aug. 1980): 286–93.
- B63b* “Roland Barthes: L’esprit, le jeu, et la pathétique.” Trans. (Fr.) Robert Louit. *Magazine littéraire* (Paris) No. 170 (Mar. 1981): 47–9.
- B63c* “Roland Barthes.” Trans. (Ger.) Jörg Trobitius. In *Vive la littérature!: Französische Literatur der Gegenwart*, edited by Verena von der Heyden-Rynsch, 25, 27. Munich: Hanser, 1989.  
Translates excerpts from the [A15](#) text.
- B63d* “Spomen za Bart.” Trans. (Bulgarian) Hristina Kochemidova. *Lit mis’l* No. 8 (1989):123–7.  
Translates the [A15](#) text; is one of two pieces published under the heading “Dve eseta” (two essays). See [B64h](#).
- B64* “Mind as Passion.” *New York Review of Books*, 25 Sept. 1980, 47–52. See [A16](#), [A26](#).
- Nowhere is the “musical” element of Sontag’s rhetoric in better evidence than in the revision “Mind as Passion” underwent in moving from [B64](#) to [A15](#). At one level the changes are minimal. The first paragraph of [B64](#) is dropped from [A15](#); [A15](#) includes (roughly) four new paragraphs concerned with the impatience of knowledge, with Canetti’s lack of aesthetic sensibility or leftist sympathies, and with the achievement of genuine admiration. But the rhetorical deck is profoundly shuffled. [A15](#) has eight segments, for example; [B64](#) has eleven. [A15](#) segment 3 draws material from segments 4 and 8–10 of [B64](#). Similarly, [B64](#) segment 6 is (more or less) segment 1 of [A15](#), which literally puts the fact and trope of Canetti’s appreciation of Hermann Broch front and center.
- B64a* “Sobre Elias Canetti: La mente como pasión.” Trans. (Span.) Cristina Holm. *Quimera* (Barcelona) No. 1 (Nov. 1980):43–9.
- B64b* “Tanken som lidelse: Om Elias Canetti.” Trans. (Swed.) Caj Lundgren. *BLM* (Stockholm) 50 (Apr. 1981):67–76.  
Translates the [A15](#) text.
- B64c* “Elias Canetti.” *Granta* No. 5 (1982):73–89.  
Reprints the [A15](#) text.
- B64d* “De l’esprit considéré comme une passion.” Trans. (Fr.) Philippe Blanchard and Susan Sontag. *Urbi* (Liège) No. 5 (Apr. 1982):iii–xiv.  
Translates the [A15](#) text.
- B64e* Excerpts. In *Contemporary Literary Criticism*, Vol. 25, edited by Jean C. Stine, 110–3. Detroit: Gale Research, 1983.

- B64f* “Geist als Leidenschaft.” Trans. (Ger.) Jörg Trobitius. In *Hüter der Verwandlung: Beiträge zum Werk von Elias Canetti*, 90–110. Munich: Hanser, 1985.  
Translates the [A15](#) text per [A15b](#).
- B64g* “Mind as Passion.” In *Essays in Honor of Elias Canetti*, 88–107. New York: FS&G, 1987.  
Reprints the [A15](#) text.
- B64h* “Mysl’ta kato strast.” Trans. (Bulgarian) Hristina Kochemidova. *Lit mis’l* No. 8 (1989):127–35.  
Translates the [A15](#) text. See [B63d](#).

*B65* “On Dance and Dance Writing.” *New Performance* 1.3 [2.3?] (1981):72–81.

Comprises a (transcribed) symposium talk and a question/answer session.

Avows that dance is “the one art where Americans are... doing the best work in the world,” in both the modern (female) and classical traditions. Allows that Europeans were the best dance audiences in the early decades of the century, as appreciating the post-Wagnerian commitments and ambitions of Loie Fuller, Isadora Duncan, and the Ballet Russe. Adduces two genealogies of modernism, one defined by the search for “an ideal form of art” (as “totally inclusive” or “totally stripped down”), the other dedicated to “the destruction of art in the name of art.” Sees modern dance as summarizing these modernist alternatives; sees changes in dance writing as following from changes in the concept of dance, as autonomous (per Balanchine, per Cunningham) relative to other art-ritual forms. Praises Edwin Denby’s dance criticism for describing “what bodies are actually doing on the stage,” for thus modeling what dance writing (what dance, what writing, what art, what life) can be.

Asked about the role of the dance critic, Sontag replies that it is “no different” from other criticisms: “to set and defend standards, to help create a discriminating audience.” Denies the analogy equating “dance as dance” with “science as science,” if it is understood as an attack on formalism; urges the connection of dance and culture (via a capsule history) even when dance strives for abstraction. Urges an admiring skepticism regarding the ostensible nihilism of Cunningham and Cage; urges a more serious skepticism about attributing radical political effectivity to artworks, especially as it implies a dogmatism little different from the Soviet variety.

*B66* People Are Talking about...(“Calvino”). *Vogue*, May 1981, 279–80, 326.

Characterizes Calvino’s “serene chronicles” by reference to Italian folktales (where “the marvelous is normal,” by contrast to “the fantastic tale” where the “ideal” erupts to “contradict the normal”), to the “pan-European tradition” of “speculative, nonrealistic fiction” typified by Borges, to the nineteenth-century distinction between the “romance” and the “novel,” to the kinship of the “fantastic tale” and travel literature. Calvino’s accomplishment is to render the

little world of writer and reader as a “condensed” and “voluptuous” “utopia” of “instant transport,” from book to book, from tale to tale.

B67 “The Hard Lesson of Poland’s Military Coup.” *Los Angeles Times*, 14 Feb. 1982, Part IV, 2.

Though she takes the February 6 Town Hall rally as intended to “distinguish” its participants “from others in the chorus of righteous indignation” over the military crackdown in Poland, Sontag’s own intention is to avoid “certain hypocrisies and untruths” entertained by “the so-called democratic left”—by challenging the view that the anti-communism of the reactionary anti-communists is anti-communism enough. Not if “the principal lesson to be learned” from the plight of Poland is “the utter villainy of the communist system.” Takes her own reluctance to act on the truths reported by such exiles-from-communism as Czeslaw Milosz as typical of the desire to avoid “giving aid and comfort to McCarthyism,” which amounts to loving justice more than truth, as in the (retrospectively self-deceiving) habit of trying “to distinguish *among* communisms.” Indeed, Sontag takes that attempt as repressing a deeper knowledge, “that communism *is* fascism,” as the fascist actions of Poland’s Communist government confirm.

(Per William Phillips—see [K103](#)—a translation of [B67](#) appeared in the Rome daily *la Repubblica*.)

- B67a* “Radical Will (and Testament): Susan Sontag Exits, Stage Left.” *Soho News*, 16 Feb. 1982, 13.  
A (slightly) edited version of [B67](#), derived from an audiotape of Sontag’s speech. It lacks (roughly) two paragraphs of material—involving the hypocrisy, not only of Reagan and company, but of European capitalists as well; involving, also, a passage on the rhetoric of political criticism—that appear in [B67](#). It *includes* a paragraph—comparing the truth-value of *Reader’s Digest* and the *Nation*—missing from [B67](#).
- B67b* “Susan Sontag’s Polish Lesson.” *Newsweek*, 22 Feb. 1982, 28.  
Excerpts (and condenses) three paragraphs of [B67a](#).
- B67c* “Poland and Other Questions: Communism and the Left.” *Nation*, 27 Feb. 1982, 229–31.  
Reprints [B67](#). An editorial headnote includes the *Reader’s Digest* paragraph from [B67a](#). See [G67](#) and [K109](#).
- B67d* “Susan Sontag Comes in out of the Left.” *Forbes*, 10 May 1982, 42.  
Excerpts (roughly) five paragraphs of [B67a](#).
- B67e* “Polémica sobre el socialismo real.” *Vuelta* (Mexico, D.F.) 6. 70 (Sept. 1982):44–6.  
A Spanish translation of [B67c](#).

B68 “Reuterswårds Zwischenwelt.” Trans. (Ger.) Jörg Trobitius. *Du* (Zurich) No. 12 (Dec. 1982):6, 13.

Though about the spaces “between” letters, and though each of the essay’s subsequent versions is divided into fragments, the German text in which it first saw print is laid out as a continuous, left-justified block of language, thus rendering paragraphing quite uncertain. The following annotation accords with the B68a segmentation, its sixteen unnumbered units arranged below into six “movements.”

(1) Ponders the realm of invention, of art, of science; where scientific discoveries are “acknowledged,” the discoveries of artists are “*recognized*,” as something that “has always been there.” (2–6) Moves inwardly from “thought” through “language” to “inter-letters,” the letter in its “pure,” functionless state, its shadowy “flip side” (referring to a Sontag family joke), remaining “on the *edge* of recognition” even after it is recognized. (7) Discusses the history of “pictorial invention” at the “site” of the letter, as in monastic manuscript illumination. (8–12) Where “The manuscript artists discovered the space inside the letter,” “Reuterswård has discovered the space adjacent,” thus illustrating the (modernist) “principle of montage” and (the Oriental) principle of the ideogram, a silent sign, yearning to become fully three-dimensional, the “essential” “inter-silence” or “unseen alphabet” that makes all speech possible, where nothing is punctuated or privileged. (13–4) Reuterswård’s “interletters” illustrate Kafka both by miming “a new, terrible relation to space” and by refusing or defusing or dematerializing space. (15–6) Admires Reuterswård’s discovery of the “inter-world” as a “felicitous” fusion of “romantic” and “classic” that renews the old notion of an “inner” world.

B68a “The Unseen Alphabet: Kafka’s Inner World.” *Vogue*, July 1983, 202–3, 253.

Presumably the English text from which B68 derives.

B68b “Det osedda alfabetet/The Unseen Alphabet/L’alphabet invisible/Das unsichtbar Alphabet.” Trans. Anne-Marie de Warren, Jane Lundblad, and Jörg Trobitius. In *The Unseen Alphabet: Letters and Figures: Carl Fredrik Reuterswård*. Stockholm: Moderna Museet, 1984.

Whether at Sontag’s direction, or as a simple vagary of translation, each version of her Reuterswård essay in this Swedish museum publication differs considerably in its segment layout from B68 if more slightly from B68a.

B68c “Das ungesehene Alphabet: Reuterswårds Zwischenwelt.” Trans. (Ger.) Jörg Trobitius. In *Carl Fredrik Reuterswård: Stil ist Betrug oder Gesammelte Werke*, edited by Norbert Nobis, 107–12. Hannover: Sprengel Museum, 1986.

B68d “Det usette alfabetet.” Trans. (Norw.) Harald Engelstad. *Vinduet* (Oslo) 40.3 (1986):12–4.

B68e “L’infra-alphabet/lettres et chiffres/vides et ombres 1978–.” In *Mes autres moi: 40 ans dans la branche 1950–1990*, by Carl Frederick Reuterswärd, 55–7. Denges-Lausanne: Éditions du Verseau, 1989.

Probably a resetting of the French B68b text.

(The extended bibliography at the end of *Mes autres moi* includes two items we could not run down, a Swedish edition of *Mes autres moi* itself, entitled *Mina andra jag: 40 ar i branschen*, and a *Frankfurter Allgemeine Magazin* [No. 437, 1988] reprint, under the title “Medien der Zukunft.”)

B69 “For *Available Light*: Some Notes on Choreography.” In *Available Light*, by John Adams et al., 15–8. Los Angeles: Museum of Contemporary Art, 1983. See B74.

Part of an audio, photographic, and documentary record of a performance piece—music by John Adams, dance by Lucinda Childs, stage design by Frank O. Gehry—mounted Sept. 29–Oct. 2, 1983. Describes the dance works of Lucinda Childs as “the result of an exceptionally coherent sensibility” deriving its “extraordinary unity” from a refusal of rhetoric, of isolatable effects. Sketches out the phases of Childs’s career, charting its movement from the fragmentary or parodistic “modernism” of Cunningham and Tharp toward a “new classicism” in which modern dance transforms “balletic” movements by reinterpreting (rather than rejecting) them. The “aesthetic purism” of Childs’s sensibility is evident in her love of diagonal postures and movement patterns, her doublings of dancers and movements, her use of decor to echo or double dance space, all of which testify to her sublime, romantic “love of dance.” (Childs, it should be noted, acted a lead role in Sontag’s film *Unguided Tour*.)

B70 “Grottos: Caves of Mystery and Magic.” *House and Garden*, Feb. 1983, 96–103, 156, 158.

Takes “the grotto” as both instancing and exceeding “the garden” as a topic in art history, in part because the Western tradition of “garden art” is “inclusive,” to the point of becoming fantastic. Though grottos originally served various purposes sacred (cells, graves) and profane (Roman hydraulic projects), the inclusion of artificial grottos in garden settings required secularization or miniaturization—as settings for outdoor banquets or plays. As the “most impure, and most ambiguous” element of garden art, “the garden’s inversion,” the grotto increasingly became “an elaborately theatrical, encrusted space.” The most fantastic modern grottos are also the most functional—as in underground shopping streets and subway stations. Where natural grottos are turned into tourist sites, even above-ground architecture (Gaudí’s work, for example) has come increasingly to reject Bauhaus style in favor of “garden-grotto motifs” that

“affirm the element of fantasy, of frivolity, of excess”—and also “a specific modern scariness” that is the legacy of the bomb shelter craze.

B71 “Mr. Balanchine.” *Vanity Fair*, July 1983, 70–5.

A pas de deux essay, its first part a brief history tracing the dance wherein Balanchine’s “classicism” parted company with, was eventually rejoined by, the (anti-balletic) “modern” dance of Isadora Duncan and Mary Wigman, the second part depicting Sontag’s own relationship to his New York City Ballet company as figured in a repeat performance, on the night after Balanchine’s death, of his *Symphony in C*. Where the moral of the first story is that the two dance traditions are joined in idealizing “the difficult and the beautiful” (“Perfection is the only standard”), the moral of the second story is that traces of Balanchine’s art are “still streaming” in the rapturous sadness of the leading dancers’ concluding posture (“perfection itself”).

B71a “Mr. Balanchine (1904–1983).” *Revista de occidente* (Madrid), 3d ser., No. 38–39 (July–Aug. 1984):185–90.  
A Spanish translation of B71.

B72 “Novel into Film.” *Vanity Fair*, Sept. 1983, 86–90.

Comprises three unnumbered segments. (1) Discusses the “dialogue” between film and other narrative arts (theater, the novel). Sees two cruxes typically arising when a “good” novel is made into a film—that of “faithfulness,” when the novel is significantly renowned, and that of length: “To do justice to a novel requires...a radically long film.” (2) Argues that Fassbinder succeeds with *Berlin Alexanderplatz* where Stroheim, with *Greed*, was thwarted, though in many respects Fassbinder’s film is an homage to von Stroheim’s, as evidenced by a number of striking plot parallels between the movies, even if their source texts derive from different traditions (Zola for Norris, Joyce for Döblin). This latter fact underscores the chief difference between the films, von Stroheim’s “anti-artificial,” dispassionately realistic visual narration contrasting with Fassbinder’s open theatricality. (3) Claims that Fassbinder’s “ruminating,” personal narrational style in *Berlin Alexanderplatz*, is *not* an anti- or meta-narrative device à la Godard or Syberberg. Rather, Fassbinder’s film is a genuine narrative, in which cinema “has at last achieved some of the dilatory, open form and accumulative power of the novel by being as long as it is—and by being theatrical.”

B72a “De la novela al cine.” *Revista de accidente* (Madrid), 3d ser., No. 40 (Sept. 1984):21–31.  
A Spanish translation of B72.

B72b “Novel into Film: Fassbinder’s *Berlin Alexanderplatz*” *Scripsi* (Melbourne) 3.1 (Apr. 1985):1–8.

B73 “Be Bold! Be Bold! Be Bold!” *Realia* (Wellesley, MA), Dec. 1983, 15.

Characterizes the contemporary moment as one in which “The best critical impulses in our society...are under vicious attack.” Describes censorship as “a formal principle,” which works by giving “pessimism—which often means truthfulness— a bad conscience.” Describes graduation—as concluding yet always “commencing”—as modeling the liberal arts ideal of “opposition to the way things are.” This “best way of being in the world” amounts to the achievement of culture in the face of provincialism or the absence of imagination. Asserts an “intrinsic connection” between the “properly international” culture of history, philosophy and the arts and “the existence of liberty.” Concludes, via reference to Spenser’s *The Faerie Queene*, by urging students to continue being students, obstinately, boldly.

B74 “For ‘Available Light’: A Brief Lexicon.” *Art in America* 71.11 (Dec. 1983):100–10.

All fourteen paragraphs of B69 are found in some form here. But this “brief lexicon” comprises fifty sections arranged alphabetically (“Beauty,” “Complexity,” etc.), many cross-referenced. The result is an eccentrically encyclopedic overview of modern dance aesthetics. B74 pays more conceited attention than B69 to the career of Lucinda Childs—more of her pieces discussed, in greater depth—and compares her at length to Merce Cunningham. Both are contrasted to the pioneering “dance-as-ritual” school of modern choreographers who sought to describe and express the primitive, the authentic; the more modern choreography of Childs and Cunningham seeks less to express emotion than create it. Yet Childs differs from Cunningham in eschewing the ironic, parodistic, disjunctive aesthetic in favor of an idealized dance space in which impersonality strives after purity, sublimity, the “exhausting of possibilities,” invoking the infinity of space by marking the finitude of the stage.

B74a “Alfabeto Childs.” *Teatro festival* (Parma) No. 1 (Dec. 1985): 13–23.

An Italian translation of B74, though its first paragraph draws language from B69.

\*B74b “Raspoloziva Svjetlost.” Trans. (Serbo-Croat.) Una Sekerez. In *Arhitektura u teatru—Robert Wilson*, 313–34. Sarajevo: Priredio Sanjin Jukic, 1991.

B75 “A Note on Bunraku.” *Threepenny Review* No. 16 (Winter 1984): 16.

“Bunraku is a theater that transcends the actor, by multiplying and displacing the sources of dramatic pathos”—as, for example, in the emphatic contrast between the stage proper, where puppets and handlers perform, and the rostrum, where the reciter and the musicians enact a “parallel” performance. Having handlers on stage with half or two-thirds life-size puppets, two handlers hooded and one bare-faced per puppet, allows for mysterious paradoxes of scale and

implication: “The puppets seem helpless, child-like” but also “sovereign, imperious.” Where most art asks us to look “beyond” distractions (past the opera-house orchestra pit, say), Bunraku, like Balanchine’s “impersonal” form of dance, evokes sublimity by means of acknowledged immobility and restraint.

*B75a* “A Note on Bunraku.” In *Hiding in Plain Sight: Essays in Criticism and Autobiography*, edited by Wendy Lesser, 188–90. San Francisco: Mercury House, 1993.

*B76* “Images of People Past.” *Art and Antiques* 1 (May 1984):66–77.

Meditates on “the unbridgeable distance between images and words,” enacting the difference by juxtaposing Paul Nadar portraits of Proust’s contemporaries with passages from *Remembrance of Things Past* inspired by the individuals photographically depicted. Within this gallery of portraits, after Sarah Bernhardt and Proust himself, is an eight-paragraph discussion by Sontag of Proust’s literary inheritance (Balzac, Montaigne, Rousseau, La Rochefoucauld) and the paradoxical development of his reputation (his modernism “came disguised as the culmination of a venerable tradition”; his achievement “was recognized sooner in the English-speaking world” than the French), followed by remarks upon the “masklike” remoteness of the Nadar photographs and the deceptive near identity of Proust’s theme (“time recovered, time stopped”) with photography’s. Yet Proust’s memory is more sensual than strictly visual, is more temporal than locally spatial. “Plenitude exists in narration: in a process that is not only about time but takes place in time. There-fore, no photograph can bring us close to Proust’s narration.”

*B77* “Model Destinations.” *TLS*, 22 June 1984, 699–700.

Considers permutations of the “us” vs. “them” rubric generic to travel literature. In classical and medieval literature the genuinely “model” destination is utopia, nowhere; real (and fictitious) travelers tend “to speak for civilization” against the alien and barbaric. Modern travel literature emphasizes the moral anomaly whereby the “civilized” is called into doubt when measured against cultures more “rational” or “natural.” Some countries are “more susceptible to idealizing than others,” specifically China and America—especially by contrast with Russia, even if “Chinese communism is infinitely more repressive” than its Soviet counterpart. For the Romantics, “travel becomes the very condition of modern consciousness”; “paradise is always being lost.” Moderns are enthusiastic to visit “revolutionary” societies because they allow a return to the past, in that revolutions “tend to occur in peasant societies” and “to preserve tenaciously much that is premodern” against “the onset of the consumer society.” Though “Mystery, risk and unpleasantness, isolation are traditional ingredients of travel to remote lands,” latter-day travel to communist countries “denies enigma” via official sponsorship and set itineraries “designed to make sure the visitor does not encounter anything contaminating,” facts usually suppressed in subsequent accounts.

*B77a* “Destinos modelo.” Trans. (Span.) Guillermina Cuevas. *Diálogos* (Mexico) 21.4 (Apr. 1985):8–13.

B78 “Cet homme. Ce pays.” Trans. (Fr.) Janine Hérisson. In *Pour Nelson Mandela*, by Jacques Derrida et al., 67–73. Paris: Éditions Gallimard, 1986.

Sontag—listed as co-author (with many others) on the title page—analyzes the symbolic equation of “This man” (Nelson Mandela) with “This country” (South Africa) by extended comparison of Mandela and Andrei Sakharov; both are (were then) prisoners “of great personal nobility, moral and political wisdom, purity and tenacity of principle, and world-wide renown.” Yet where Sakharov is a “dissident” who represents in the world’s eyes “his own exemplary courage” and “rightness,” Mandela’s symbolic value follows from the domestic acknowledgment of his status as “president of a democratic country that does not yet exist.” Where freedom for Sakharov would consist in personal liberty, Mandela’s requires liberty for his entire community; hence his persistent refusal to “accept anything less than an unconditional” release.

*B78a* “Dieser Mann. Dieses Land.” Trans. (Ger.) Karin Graf. In *Für Nelson Mandela*, by Jacques Derrida et al., 63–7. Reinbek bei Hamburg: Rowohlt Verlag, 1987.

**B78** is datelined “New York, Juli 1986” in this edition.

*B78b* “This Man, This Country.” In *For Nelson Mandela*, edited by Jacques Derrida and Mustapha Tlili, 47–52. New York: Seaver Books, Henry Holt & Co.; Markham, Ont.: Fitzhenry & Whiteside, 1987.

Adds a number of contributions to the collection, mostly by American writers. Sontag’s essay is revised in view of Sakharov’s release from custody.

*B78c* “For Nelson Mandela.” *Threepenny Review* No. 28 (Winter 1987):27.

The English text of **B78**.

B79 “When Writers Talk among Themselves.” *New York Times Book Review*, 5 Jan. 1986, 1, 22–3.

Addresses the paradoxes that follow when the successful solitude of writing results in “a stack of invitations” to writers’ congresses—where “collectivities and their cultural relations” are the inevitable topics. Though assuming “literature as privacy” and holding that “literature entails the right to be apolitical,” Sontag agrees “there is no discourse about *writers* that is not political,” that does not “project an idea of how society ought to be.” Writers’ conferences typically seek “a moral consensus” regarding censorship, dissidence, and human rights “beyond politics.” If “writers acting collectively” have not been entirely

successful in mobilizing public opinion—by contrast with “rare individual writers” like Solzhenitsyn and Nadine Gordimer—Sontag values such congresses for the “context” they provide, apart from the media and the state, for sympathetic writerly “talk.” Notes the different responses her remarks on communism and fascism elicited when addressed to other writers in 1977 and 1980 than when addressed to an audience of non-writers in 1982.

\*B79a “Unter sich sein, sprechen: Über die moderne Institution der Schriftstellerkongresse.” In *Wo wir stehen: Dreißig Beiträge zur Kultur der Moderne*, edited by Martin Meyer, 144–51. Zurich: Verlag Neue Zürcher Zeitung, 1987.

A German translation of B79.

B79b “Cuando los escritores hablan entre ellos y frente al Estado.” Trans. (Span.) J.J.R. *La Nación* (Buenos Aires), 12 Apr. 1987, sec. 4a, 1–2.

B79c “Unter sich sein, sprechen. Über die moderne Institution der Schriftstellerkongresse.” In *Wo wir stehen: Dreißig Beiträge zur Kultur der Moderne*, edited by Martin Meyer, 144–51. Munich: Piper, 1988.

Reprints B79a.

B80 “Wider den Zwang zur Politik.” Trans. (Ger.) Jörg Trobitius. *Frankfurter Rundschau*, 26 July 1986, ZB3.

Takes “debate” as essential to the life of writing—the writer’s debate with himself, with literature, with politics—while claiming that writers are *not* universal voices, are valuable exactly in their singularity, and are therefore most politically useful when they refuse to speak the language of direct political engagement. Sees the endless debate on the topic at PEN meetings as evidence of the necessity to keep “realist” and “anti-realist” strains of literature in permanent dialogue, lest “indirectness” and singularity be lost.

B81 “La danse est le danseur.” Trans. (Fr.) Sophie Mayoux. *Vogue* (Paris), Dec. 1986.

Contests Lincoln Kirstein’s observation that, with Balanchine, the choreographer gained “primacy” over the dancer. “That the work is now routinely seen as transcending the performer” is no less true in other arts. Yet “There is a mystery of incarnation in dance that has no analogue in the other performing arts.” Dancers live by the standard of “perfection.” In its kinship to sport—in which “Raising the level is the function of the champion”—dance, unlike the other arts, is clearly “progressive.” Unlike sport, dance requires “a categorical denial” of the necessary pain of performance, which must seem “effortless, masterful.” (That sport typically makes “effort visible” affords insight into Riefenstahl’s political program for *Olympia*, where effort is deemphasized.) Great dancers, preeminently Baryshnikov, “project a state of total focus.”

amounting to “the staging of a transfiguration” that “*is* the performance.” In striving for transcendence, dance becomes “a spiritual activity in physical form.”

- B81a* “Dancer and the Dance.” *London Review of Books*, 5 Feb. 1987, 9–10.  
The English text of [B81](#).
- B81b* “El bailarín y la danza.” Trans. (Span.) Eduardo Paz Leston. *La Nación* (Buenos Aires), 31 May 1987, sec. 4a, 1–2.  
Translates [B81a](#).
- B81c* Dance (“Dance, Etcetera”). *Vanity Fair*, June 1987, 26–9.  
Reprints [B81a](#).
- B81d* “Dancer and the Dance.” *About the House* (London) 7.12 (Summer 1988):38–9.  
Reprints [B81a](#).
- B81e* “Perfektionen piskar dansaren.” Trans. (Swed.) Anna Pyk. *Dagens Nyheter* (Stockholm), 2 Apr. 1989, 42–3.  
Translates [B81a](#), slightly abridged.
- B81f* “The Blow of the Sublime.” *Art and Design* (London) 8.11–12 (Nov.–Dec. 1993):40–1.  
Abridges [B81a](#).

B82 Salute (“Lincoln Kirstein Turns Eighty”). *Vanity Fair*, May 1987, 28.

Praises Lincoln Kirstein’s exemplary career as an “exceptionally prescient aesthete” by comparing him to A. Everett Austin and Julien Levy, who sponsored their artistic enthusiasms with “anthology institutions,” a museum, a gallery, or a magazine. Kirstein, by contrast, sponsored “an institution exhibiting one genius,” the New York City Ballet with choreographer George Balanchine. Also praises Kirstein as “an important, thrilling *writer*” whose life “yields a double meaning” about the spiritual value of eccentricity, at once self-denying and self-asserting.

B83 “The Pleasure of the Image.” *Art in America* 75.11 (Nov. 1987): 122–31.

Comprises four unnumbered segments. (1) Discusses the pleasurable spell cast by Gerard Houckgeest’s *The Tomb of William the Silent in the Nieuwe Kirk in Delft*, which is less concerned with an individualized subject than with architectural space. By contrast with 3D miniatures, and with other contemporary paintings of church interiors (including one by Houckgeest), the Mauritshuis *Tomb* is striking less for inclusion than (its proto-photographic) exclusion, so as “to refuse visual closure.” (2) Rather than awe-inspiring emptiness, an as-if literal “fullness” results, in part due to the diminutive figures who provide a sense of scale, whose relative paucity of numbers invokes “absence,” hence a mood of “metaphysical” pathos. (3) Human figures evoke not only space but time, activity; Houckgeest’s figures are “full-bodied,” are visiting “citizens” or family members rather than worshipers. Similarly emblematic are the graffiti depicted on a central architectural column, ostensibly the work of children, though among

them is the artist's signature. (4) Observes the doubling of spaces (column, canvas) and relationships (vandalizing, documenting) evoked by Houckgeest's graffiti. Where modern graffiti asserts alienated presence and powerlessness, "Houckgeest's painting describes a world in which the abstract order...is so assumed, so successful, that it can be played with," even "mildly defaced" without "even the slightest foretaste of the menace" implied by contemporary graffiti. By contrast with the melancholy evoked in the eighteenth century by "ruins" (connoting "decay," "our *past*"), Houckgeest's depictions of architecture evoke both present and past, and in so doing offer "relief from the compulsion of nostalgia.

*B83a* "Ein Raum ohne Zweitracht." *Zeit Magazin* (Hamburg), 25 Dec. 1987, 10, 12, 38–9.

A German translation of [B83](#).

*B83b* "The Pleasure of the Image [Gerard Houckgeest]." In *Writers on Artists*, edited by Daniel Halpern, 92–9. San Francisco: North Point Press, 1988.

*B83c* "De genoegens van het beeld." Trans. (Dutch) Bab Westerveld. In *Gezicht op het Mauritshuis: Poëtische visies op een uitzonderlijk museum*, edited by H.R.Hoetink, 130–9. The Hague: Meulenhoff/Landshoff, 1989.

*B83d* "Ein Raum ohne Zwietracht." In *Zeit-Museum der 100 Bilder*, edited by Fritz J.Raddatz, 32–42. Frankfurt am Main: Insel Verlag, 1989.

*B83e* "The Pleasure of the Image." In *Gezicht op het Mauritshuis: Poëtische visies op een uitzonderlijk museum*, edited by H.R.Hoetink, 247–53. The Hague: Meulenhoff/Landshoff, 1989.

Bound within the same covers as the [B83c](#) translation.

*B84* "In Conclusion..." *East-West Film Journal* 2.1 (Dec. 1987): 99–106.

Attests to the basic seriousness of humor in remarks concluding a conference on the topic. Takes humor to be an "umbrella term," relational rather than essentialist. Takes discussions of humor as tending toward the didactic, often along national or historical lines, as "an opportunity not easily forgone to make some statements about a country's culture, its history, its dilemmas"; just as folk humor itself is often seen (on film) as "the repository of certain distinctive national or native traditions" depicted as standing opposed to "the homogenizing pressures" of *mass* culture cinema. Cites Bergson, Freud, and Bakhtin as validating the critical or disruptive function of humor. Discusses "the universally funny or comic" by reference to the fool and the trickster, and their pairing. Concludes by noting a converse question—what's not funny?—as it helps us to think of "the way that humor is culture-bound." Contrasts her own

positive analysis of *Kind Hearts and Coronets* to the more negative reaction of an Indian colleague and expresses sympathy with his position in light of her own extreme dislike of *Blue Velvet*.

B85 “Wagner’s Fluids.” *London Review of Books*, 10 Dec. 1987, 8–9.

An extended meditation on the way fluids play a “decisive role” in Wagnerian mythology, as in *Tristan and Isolde*, which “begins and ends with journeys over water,” though the sought-for redemption in that story (and others) “does not happen.” In the one opera where redemption does transpire, *Parsifal*, it is less water than blood that is the medium. Blood is the only fluid that leaves the body in Wagner, always a male body, often via erotic and self-inflicted wounds; woman “characteristically doubles as healer and as seducer.” Wagner’s love potions heighten “impossibility, loosening the tie to life.” Though this “exalted passivity” seems “a most extravagant way of describing the voluptuous loss of consciousness in orgasm,” the “eroticism is more means than end,” a means to annihilation. Thus the Tristan of Act 3 is “a suffering man who wants to die but can’t—until, finally, he can.” Thus the eroticism of Tristan and Isolde together “is one that has to self-destruct.” Wagner’s operas do more than depict “being overcome” by emotion. They enact it by “extravagant and outsized means.” Where “previous notions” of the association of the lyrical and the lethal had “focused on the singer,” Wagner heightens the intensity by making it “a property of the music as a whole.” Rather than invoke the “seraphic” by means of musical “velocity,” Wagner invokes something like the repressed (something “from ‘below’”) by slowing down the music, which both “amplifies and makes agonisingly intimate” the “distinctive mix of feelings depicted.” Though we live in an era where addiction and enchantment “are now rarely viewed as anything but positive,” Wagner deserves respectful “ambivalence,” for his ambitions, for his learning, for his “strange and troubling” fervor.

(According to Sontag, B85 has been distributed as program notes for performances of Wagner in Los Angeles, San Francisco, and Madrid.)

- B85a “Los fluidos de Wagner.” Trans. (Span.) Jorge Ortiz Barili. *La Nación* (Buenos Aires), 24 Jan. 1988, sec. 4a, 1–2.  
Translates a slightly expanded text of B85.
- B85b “Los fluidos en Wagner.” Trans. (Span.) Raúl Ortiz. *Vuelta* (Mexico, D.F.) 12.141 (Aug. 1988):22–7.  
Translates a slightly expanded text of B85.
- B85c “Wagner’s Fluids.” In *Les Symbolistes et Richard Wagner/Die Symbolisten und Richard Wagner*, edited by Wolfgang Storch and Josef Mackert, 89–94. Berlin: Edition Hentrich, 1991.  
Reprints B85, slightly expanded (hence, is probably the English text upon which all translations are based).

- B85d* “Wagner und das Flüssige.” Trans. (Ger.) Guntram Weber. In *Die Symbolisten und Richard Wagner: Übersetzung der fremdsprachigen Texte*, 20–4. Berlin: Edition Hentrich, 1991. Translates [B85c](#). (Though cited separately, [B85c](#) and [B85d](#) are bound within the same covers.)
- B85e* “Wagners Flüssigkeiten: Neuschöpfung des Erhabenen—Letalität des Lyrischen.” [Trans. (Ger.) Martin Hielscher.] *Lettre internationale* (Berlin) No. 21 (Summer 1993): 77–80. A second German translation of [B85c](#).
- B86* “Pilgrimage.” *New Yorker*, 21 Dec. 1987, 38–48, 50, 53–4. Annotated at [A24](#).
- \**B86a* “Pilgrimsfard.” Trans. (Swed.) Jan Söderqvist. *Allt om böcker* [Stockholm?] No. 4 (1988):10–4, 56–60.
- B86b* “To□masu Man ni atta hi: Watashi no sekai bungaku nyūmon.” Trans. (Jap.) Takao Tomiyama. *Subaru* (Tokyo) 10. 4 (Apr. 1988):134–51.
- B86c* “Pellegrinaggio.” *Lettera internazionale* (Rome) 4.17 (Summer/July–Aug., 1988):27–33. An Italian translation of [B86](#), differently segmented.
- B86d* “Peregrinación.” Trans. (Span.) C.Scavino. *El País Semanal* (Madrid), 18 Sept. 1988, 2–15.
- B86e* “Wallfahrt.” Trans. (Ger.) Wulf Teichmann. *Akzente* (Munich) No. 6 (Dec. 1988):523–46.
- B86f* “Na poklonenie.” Trans. (Bulgarian) Nevyana Nikolova. *Panorama* No. 2 (1989):31–46.
- B86g* “Peregrinación.” Trans. (Span.) Jesús Cabanillas. *El Paseante* (Madrid) No. 13 (1989):40–51.
- B86h* “Wallfahrt.” Trans. (Ger.) Wulf Teichmann. *Neue deutsche Literatur (Berlin)* 37.4 (Apr. 1989):149–70.
- B86i* “Zarándokút.” Trans. (Hungarian) Mária Borbás. *Nagyvilág* (Budapest) 34 (Dec. 1989):1760–76.
- B86j* “Pielgrzymka.” Trans. (Pol.) Teresa Truszkowska. *Zeszyty literackie* (Paris) No. 34 (Spring 1991):31–50.
- B86k* “Pèlerinage.” Trans. (Fr.) Dominique Rueff. *La règle du jeu* (Paris), Aug. 1991, 96–123.

*B87* “Una cierta idea de Europa.” *El europeo* No. 1 (May 1988):42–5.

(According to Sontag, [B87](#) was prepared for presentation to a conference held in Berlin, 25–29 May 1988, and was published in the proceedings [*Ein Traum von Europa*] as “Noch eine Elegie,” though it first appeared, prior to the

conference, as “Europa,” in *El europeo* No. 0 [Apr. 1988]:54–5, 168–9. Lacking confirmation of these data, we have given pride of place to the earliest version we acquired.)

Ponders what “Europe” means. Not the “Euro-dollar” Europe that threatens the “polyphonic” and ethically humbling literary-cultural tradition Sontag avows, from which she (via her grandparents) derives. But the Europe that provides the Archimedian leverage point needed to undo or escape American culture. Not the power-political “Paneuropeanism” of a Napoleon or a Hitler or colonialism. But the Europe claimed by Central European writers—Kundera, Havel, Konrad, Kiš—as a (subversive) way of calling for an end to superpower rivalry. Asks if Western Europeans have a comparably romantic project, or whether the general loss of power in both Europes involves less extension than retrenchment, “the europeanization...of Europe,” its conservation in the face of cultural oversupply. Denies that the modernizing of Europe is equivalent to its “americanization,” in view of Japan’s increasing influence as a harbinger of a new cultural/political geography in which countries will be theme parks, everybody tourists, in which “Europe” will be a kind of “secret,” moveable heritage (à la Stein) that exiles can carry with them in their travels.

- B87a* “Noch eine Elegie.” Trans. (Ger.) Marianne Frisch. In *Literaturmagazin* (Hamburg) No. 22 (1988):131–6. Probably corresponds to the text that appeared in the conference proceedings—unless this just *is* the proceedings—to judge by its volume title (“Ein Traum von Europa”) and an introductory phrase in the third paragraph alluding to “other poets taking part in this symposium,” though a Sept. 1988 copyright indicates this may be a subsequent publication.
- B87b* “Elegie auf Europa: Gegenwart und Zukunft einer Idee.” *Frankfurter Allgemeine*, 28 May 1988, 27. A German translation of (we presume, here and following) Sontag’s English original; *not* the same as [B87a](#).
- B87c* “Susan Sontag om Europa som idé: Det borde vara fullständigt misskrediterat.” Trans. (Swed.) Maria Ekman. *Dagens Nyheter* (Stockholm), 30 Nov. 1988, “Kultur” sec., 4. Per Sontag, this translation also appeared in *Framtider bulletin* (Stockholm) No. 11 (1989):6–7.
- B87d* “La noción de Europa (una elegía más).” Trans. (Span.) Jorge Ortiz Barili. *La Nación* (Buenos Aires), 11 Dec. 1988, sec. 4a, 1–2. Not the same translation as [B87](#).
- B87e* “L’idée d’Europe (une élégie de plus).” Trans. (Fr.) Anne-Dominique Balmès. *Les temps modernes* 44 (Jan. 1989): 77–82.

- B87f* “Jeszcze jedna elegia.” Trans. (Pol.) Jan Zieliński. *Res Publica* (Warsaw) 3.6 (June 1989):6–8.
- B87g* “Europa: Noch ein Elegie.” In *Im Osten erwacht die Geschichte: Essays zur Revolution in Mittel- und Osteuropa*, edited by Frank Schirrmacher, 13–8. Stuttgart: Deutsche Verlags-Anstalt, 1990.  
Reprints [B87b](#).
- B87h* “Evropa: Još jedna elegija.” Trans. (Serbo-Croat.) Ranko Sladojević. *Radio-Sarajevo-treći program* (Sarajevo) No. 68–69 (1990):297–9.

*B88* “Aids—sjukdomen ingen vill ha men samhället behöver.” Trans. (Swed.) Berit Skogsberg. *Dagens Nyheter* (Stockholm), 23 Oct. 1988, 42–3. See [A22](#).

Draws on sections 1, 5, and 6 of [A20](#). Sontag recounts her own experience of cancer, her reasons for writing [A20](#); discusses the ramifications of the “plague” metaphor, its applicabilities to AIDS, those of AIDS-as-plague to political and cultural discourse.

- B88a* “AIDS and Its Metaphors.” *New York Review of Books*, 27 Oct. 1988, 89–99.  
The four numbered segments of [B88a](#) are annotated at [A20](#) as sections 5–8 of *AIDS och dess metaforer*, though presumably both [A20](#) and [B88](#) derive from the same English manuscript as [B88a](#). Section 8 of [A20](#) expands on [B88a](#) section 4 by adding paragraphs specifying the “military metaphor” and “the medical model of the public weal” as preeminent and “converse” threats to those who suffer from catastrophic disease.
- B88b* “Metafory AIDS.” Trans. (Pol.) Mieczysław Orski. *Odra* (Warsaw) No. 4 (1989):24–9.  
A Polish translation (and severe abridgment) of [B88a](#).
- \*\*\* “Catastrophe in Slow Motion.” *Observer*, 5 Mar. 1989, 33–4.  
Roughly half of this excerpt from [A20a](#) is derived from the same manuscript source as [B88a](#). Because the other half derives from sections 1–3 of [A20a](#), it is annotated at [B89](#).
- B88c* “AIDS v metaforách.” [Trans. (Czech) Alena Jindrová-Spilarová.] *Lettre internationale* (Prague) No. 2 (Spring 1991): 34–41.  
Translates [B88a](#), though some phrasing and paragraphing are closer to (derive from?) [A20b](#).
- B88d* “From *AIDS and Its Metaphors*” In *A Journal of the Plague Year: Authoritative Text, Backgrounds, Contexts, Criticism*, A

Norton Critical Edition, edited by Paula R. Backscheider, 250–8. New York: W.W.Norton, 1992.

Reprints section 5 of [A20b](#).

*B88e* “AIDS i njegove metafore.” Trans. (Serbo-Croat.) Senada Kreso. *Odjek* (Sarajevo), July 1993, 4–5.  
Translates [A20b](#) section 1.

*B89* “Catastrophe in Slow Motion.” *Observer*, 5 Mar. 1989, 33–4.

Draws language from every section of [A20a](#) except the fourth, though hardly in strict sequence.

Recalls her own cancer treatment; notes changes that have occurred in cancer thought, in part because society finds it difficult to be “obsessed” with more than one disease at a time. Though AIDS, like cancer, involves “shame,” that shame is more directly attributable to a specific cause; though authorities are cautious in predicting the course of AIDS, uncertainty generates “a preoccupying distinction” between (stigmatized) carriers and “the general public.” Because plague “is the principle metaphor” by which AIDS is understood, reactions to AIDS reveal a “link between imagining disease and imagining foreignness.” Though associated with Africa and Haiti, AIDS appears in the United States and Europe as the model of “the catastrophes privileged populations feel await them.” Modern thinking is apocalyptically “future-minded” and “doubled” as we await projected disaster to arrive, which does “an unparalleled violence” to our “sense of reality.” Even so, some dreadful illnesses should “come to seem ordinary” rather than be the occasion for metaphoric warfare on victims.

*B90* “Godot Comes to Sarajevo.” *New York Review of Books*, 21 Oct. 1993, 52–9.

(The full text of [B90](#) was published in 1994 as “Waiting for Godot in Sarajevo” in *Performing Arts Journal* 16.2 [May] 87–106. Significant passages found in the *PAJ* text, mostly involving European tribalisms and media trivialities, are lacking from [B90](#) sections 2 and 5.)

Comprises five sections.

(1) Describes her motives for staging *Godot*; why that particular play. Addresses the paradox of Sarajevo’s ongoing cultural life by which *Godot* “may have been the ‘lightest’ entertainment” available as well as a crucial (if ambivalent) link with European culture and values; for the actors, producing the play “is a serious expression of normality.”

(2) Discusses the intricacies of casting the play, the decision to have three (variously gendered) Vladimir and Estragon pairs. Discusses the complexities of directing in a foreign language, as well the complex mix of cast ethnicities, which gives the lie to claims that the Bosnian war is a civil or religious war, especially when so few Sarajevans are religiously observant.

(3) Discusses the problems of rehearsing malnourished and fearful actors by candlelight. Discusses the set design, stage business, the extra characters—not to

mention poor lighting and restroom facilities—as arguing against staging the entire play, as if “the despair of Act I was [despair] enough.”

(4) Contrasts minimalist stagings of the play (especially Lucky’s monologue) to her avowedly (and contextually) “realist” version, “full of anguish, of immense sadness, and toward the end, violence.” Contrasts *Waiting for Godot* with “waiting for Clinton” to intervene, and with the “waiting for our props” that scarcity and inter-theater rivalry enforced. Adduces the depression brought on by contrasting Sarajevo’s past as “an ideal of pluralism” with its present status as a “city of rockets”—despite which some find life there still bearable.

(5) Expresses relief that the production, despite its complexity and her overly maternal approach, “came together,” surprise as well at the publicity it generated, was designed to generate, which leads to analysis of the (“indecent”) way that “media attention sometimes becomes the main story.” Though the Bosnian war is “the first of the three European genocides of our century to be tracked by the world press,” television cannot record “an absence—the absence of any political will to end the suffering.” Avows it is less television than pro-Serb political prejudice that renders the agony of Sarajevo unreal, however real it seems to Sontag. Recounts her emotional experience as a spectator of the play’s third performance, when the silence following the news that Mr. Godot is not coming was broken only by the sounds of sniper fire and an armored UN vehicle.

*B90a* “Godot in Sarajevo: Eine Theaterinszenierung unter dem Belagerungszustand.” *Lettre internationale* (Berlin) (Winter 1993):4–9.

This German translation of [B90](#) incorporates many passages of the *PAJ* text (cited above), and also some [B90](#) economies, especially in segment 5.

*B90b* “Waiting for Godot in Sarajevo.” *Observer Magazine* (London), 24 Oct. 1993, 14–23, 26–7.

*B90c* “Beckett en Bosnie (1): En attendant Godot à Sarajevo.” Trans. (Fr.) Pierre Alien. *Libération* (Paris), 2 Nov. 1993, 39–40.

[B90c-g](#) appeared in series, the parts corresponding to [B90](#) segments 1–5, though some *PAJ* matter (see [B90](#)) is evident in segments 2 and 3. Per *Le Monde* (5 Nov.), an insert section that included “En attendant Godot à Sarajevo” was published for the Carrefour des littératures européennes de Strasbourg conference held Nov. 4–7 and featuring Toni Morrison, Edouard Glissant, Sontag, Derrida, et al. How the *Libération* serialization relates to the insert we cannot say.

*B90d* “Beckett en Bosnie (2): Auditions à Sarajevo.” Trans. (Fr.) Pierre Alien. *Libération* (Paris), 3 Nov. 1993, 48.

- B90e* “Beckett en Bosnie (3): Un détour par la bougie la plus proche.” Trans. (Fr.) Pierre Allen. *Libération* (Paris), 4 Nov. 1993, 42.
- B90f* “Beckett en Bosnie (4): Pas de corde pour Pozzo.” Trans. (Fr.) Pierre Allen. *Libération* (Paris), 5 Nov. 1993, 37.
- B90g* “Beckett en Bosnie (fin): L’endroit le plus réel du monde.” Trans. (Fr.) Pierre Allen. *Libération* (Paris), 5–7 Nov. 1993, 33.
- B90h* “Godot arriva a Sarajevo.” Trans. (Ital.) Rosa Rita D’Acquarica. *La rivista dei libri* (Milan) 3.12 (Dec. 1993): supplement pp. 1–7.

## SECTION C

### Short Fictions

C1 “The Dummy.” *Harper’s Bazaar*, Sept. 1963, 250–1, 282, 285. See [E18](#).  
Annotated at [A14](#), though the [C1](#) text is slightly longer.

- C1a* “The Dummy.” In *The Uncommon Reader*, edited by Alice S.Morris, 327–35. New York: Avon, 1965.
- C1b* “The Dummy.” In *More Stories Strange and Sinister*, edited by Laurette Naomi Pizer, 71–81. London: Panther, 1967.
- C1c* “Doble, triple....” *Revista de occidente* (Madrid), 2d ser., 16 (Jan.–Feb.–Mar. 1967):334–45.  
A Spanish translation of [C1](#).
- C1d* “Doble, triple....” In *Las mejores historias siniestras*, edited by Laurette Naomi Pizer, 421–34. Barcelona: Editorial Brujera, 1968.  
Reprints [C1c](#).
- C1e* “Kukla.” Trans. (Rus.) S.Tartakovsky. *Literaturnaya gazeta* (Moscow) No. 39 (1980):15.  
Translates and abridges the [C1](#) story.
- C1f* “A bábu.” Trans. (Hungarian) Éva Lendvay. *Nagyvilág* (Budapest) 25 (Dec. 1980):1747–52.  
Translates the [A14](#) text.
- C1g* “Dvojník.” Trans. (Czech) Ivana Doležalová. *Světová literatura* (Prague) No. 6 (1985):16–20.  
Translates the [A14](#) text. (See also [B19f](#) and [C7b](#).)
- C1h* “Manekin.” Trans. (Pol.) Anna Kołyszko. *Literature, na świecie* (Warsaw) No. 10 (1988):166–81.  
Translates the [A14](#) text.
- C1i* “Ha-golem.” Trans. (Heb.) Moshe Ron. In *Mah ha-sipur shelkha: Sipurim ketsarim Amerika ’iyim mi-shenot ha-60 vaha-70*, edited by Moshe Ron, 101–10. Tel Aviv: Am Oved Publishers, 1993.

Translates the [A14](#) text, though “Miss Love” becomes “My Love” in the process.

C2 “Man with a Pain.” *Harper’s*, Apr. 1964, 72–5.

Though its nameless central character’s dreams recall those of Hippolyte in [A1](#) (“The pain is a house, with many rooms”), the quasi third-person narration and its Manhattan setting look forward to *Death Kit* (“Or, he is a house in which the pain lives”). Comprises four numbered segments.

(1) Contrasts the man’s painful awkwardness with the city’s speed and energy. Odd logic (“It doesn’t come out whole, because it doesn’t come out as a scream”) suggests a first-person narrator.

(2) A history of pain: this one (onset, consequences denied, possible perpetrators, categories) and “All pains he has ever known” (a bicycle accident, a subsequent dream).

(3) Punctual moments (“Thursday morning he says: This is the day”) alternate with imagistic musings (“The pain is the medium of his life”; “His life is full of things”).

(4) Saturday morning; the voice of reason. Sunday afternoon; another voice? On the Staten Island ferry, he yawns, floats; madness or sanity; feeling “empty and polar,” “He is his own survivor,” “just like everyone else!”

C3 “The Will and the Way.” *Partisan Review* 32 (Summer 1965): 373–96.

Annotated at [A14](#) as “American Spirits.” The [C3](#) segments are numbered; those of [A14](#) are not.

C4 “Project for a Trip to China.” *Atlantic*, Apr. 1973, 69–77. See [A18](#).

The text annotated at [A14](#) is shorter than [C4](#) by three sentences. Some details are changed: “Five white men” in a photograph become “Seven white men” in the [A14](#) version. The [C4](#) original also carries a byline that—given Sontag’s emphasis on the relation between truth and fiction—carries the weight of an ironic subtitle: “A story by Susan Sontag.”

*C4a* “Projet d’un voyage en Chine.” Trans. (Fr.) Guy Durand. *Tel quel* (Paris) No. 54 (Summer 1973):68–84.

*C4b* “Project for a Trip to China.” In *ND: New Directions in Prose and Poetry* 35, edited by J.Laughlin, Peter Glass-gold, and Frederick R.Martin, 130–51. New York: New Directions; Canada: McClelland & Stewart, 1977.

*C4c* “Projekt einer Reise nach China.” Trans. (Ger.) Marianne Frisch. *Literaturmagazin* (Hamburg) No. 10 (1979): 270–92. Translates the [A14](#) text.

*C4d* “Projekt návštěvy Číny.” *Revolver revue* (Prague) No. 6 (1986):11pp. A Czech translation of the [A14](#) text.

C4e “Plan podróy do Chin.” Trans. (Pol.) Anna Kołyszko. *Literatura na świecie* (Warsaw) No. 1 (1987):180–211.  
Translates the A14 text.

C5 “Debriefing.” *American Review* No. 18 (Sept. 1973):68–85. See A18 and E13.

Annotated at A14; C5 is longer by a few sentences, most of them in the story’s last segment (“What I’m Doing”).

C5a “Enquête.” Trans. (Fr.) Claire Malroux. *Les lettres nouvelles* (Paris), 5 Dec. 1975, 122–41.

C5b “Kibeszámoló.” Trans. (Hungarian) Ferenc Temesi. *Nagyvilág* (Budapest) 21 (Dec. 1976):1763–74.

C5c “Hva jeg gjør.” Trans. (Norw.) Mona Lange. *Gyldendals aktuelle magazin* (Oslo) No. 2 (1979):13.  
Translates the last section of the A14 text. See F45.

C5d “Lagebesprechung.” Trans. (Ger.) Marianne Frisch. *Merkur* (Stuttgart) 33 (Jan. 1979):48–62.  
Translates the A14 text.

C5e “Odszyfrowywanie.” Trans. (Pol.) Hanna Rowińska. In *Gabinet Luster: Krótka proza amerykańska 1961–1977*, edited by Zbigniew Lewicki, 387–411. Warsaw: Czytelnik, 1980.

C5f “Zapiski (Raskaz).” Trans. (Bulgarian) Hristina Kochemidova. *S’vremennik* No. 4 (1980):365–78.  
Translates the A14 text.

C6 “Doctor Jekyll.” *Partisan Review* 41 (Winter 1974):539–52, 586–603.

The text annotated at A14 is considerably rephrased compared to C6; clauses are shifted, modifiers are dropped, sentences are deleted. The effect is primarily a matter of greater concision, making the tale slightly more dramatic, more fabulous. (Occasional references to this as “Dr. Jekyll” follow the listing in the PR contents page for this issue.)

C7 “Baby.” *Playboy*, Feb. 1974, 74, 76, 120, 204–8, 210–2.

The text annotated at A14 is shorter than C7 by some twenty (very brief) paragraphs.

C7a “Baobao.” Trans. (Mandarin) Wu Yin. *Waiguo wenyi* (Shanghai) No. 5 (Oct. 1982):5–43.  
Translates the A14 text.

C7b “Náš maličký.” Trans. (Czech) Ivana Doležalová. *Světová literatura* (Prague) No. 6 (1985):21–41.  
Translates the A14 text. (See also B19f and C1g.)

C8 “Old Complaints Revisited.” *American Review* No. 21 (Oct. 1974):213–52.

The text annotated at [A14](#) is, by contrast with the other stories reprinted in *I, etcetera*, extensively revised. C8 is not segmented; the [A14](#) text has seven unnumbered segments. Many sentences are rephrased, often by deleting adjectives or adverbs (the narrator’s “thin, pedantic, overscrupulous voice” in C8 becomes a “thin, overscrupulous voice” in [A14](#)). Also deleted, especially in segments 4, 6, and 7, are whole sentences and paragraphs, usually for the purpose of making the repetition of “old complaints” somewhat less repetitious.

C9 “Unguided Tour.” *New Yorker*, 31 Oct. 1977, 40–5. See [A18](#), [E20](#).

The text annotated at [A14](#) is very near to C9, though slight shifts in paragraphing and phrasing are evident.

C9a “Voyage désorganisé: Une nouvelle inédite de Susan Sontag.” Trans. (Fr.) Robert Louit. *Magazine littéraire* (Paris) No. 139 (July–Aug. 1978):8–11.

C9b “Unguided Tour.” *Granta* No. 1 (Autumn 1979):191–9.  
Reprints the [A14](#) text.

C9c “Ohne Reiseführung.” Trans. Marianne Frisch. *Zeit Magazin* (Hamburg) No. 7 (9 Feb. 1979):32, 34, 37–8, 40.  
A German translation of the [A14](#) text.

C9d “Rondreis zonder gids.” Trans. (Dutch) Carol Limonard. In *Modern Amerikaanse verhalen*, edited by Frans Kellendonk and Carol Limonard, 172–82. Amsterdam: Van Genneep, 1982.  
Translates the [A14](#) text.

C9e “Unguided Tour.” *North Country* (Grand Forks, ND) (Spring 1982):19–28.  
Reprints the [A14](#) text.

C9f “Meiyou xiangdao de youlan.” Trans. (Mandarin) Wu Yin. *Waiguo Wenyi* (Shanghai) No. 5 (Oct. 1982):43–57.  
Translates the [A14](#) text.

C9g “Unguided Tour.” In *The Art of the Tale: An International Anthology of Short Stories 1945–1985*, edited by Daniel Halpern, 666–74. New York: Elisabeth Sifton Books, Viking, 1986.  
Reprints the [A14](#) text.

C9h “Unguided Tour.” In *The Art of the Tale: An International Anthology of Short Stories*, edited by Daniel Halpern, 666–74. New York: Elisabeth Sifton Books, Penguin, 1987.  
Reprints the [A14](#) text.

C10 “Description (of a Description).” *Antaeus* No. 53 (Autumn 1984):111–4.

The event “described” in C10 is (twice) overwritten, in two fonts: italics, to tell and pre-tell the story of a man’s sudden collapse in a public street; roman, to provide a running commentary and elaboration of the stories told in italics.

Reading the italic text alone, as the paragraphing schema allows, yields an epistemological parable in which the original experience is (as if) contaminated by foreknowledge; indeed, foreknowledge is even posited as the man’s reason for falling, as if commentary *were* a kind of fall, into an uncertainty as to whether we experience *something* rather than “nothing.” The prospect for disintegration in this is mimed by a decreasing complexity of sentence structures and an increasing number of sentences per each of the fable’s three unnumbered segments.

The alternative reading strategy, reading both fonts together sequentially, complicates the task of comprehension yet again— by retarding access to the “italic” stories; by punctuation patterns that require hesitation, either because the direction of modification is unclear or because punctuation is lacking altogether; by posing unanswerable questions about time and place (“Switzerland, or the nineteenth century?”). In segment 1 the man recovers his voice and recounts a history of (sexual) agony, to which the narrator’s response is “Deadpan” stoicism, despite the benefactory impulse to cover “him with language like a blanket.” In the subjunctive segment 2 the victim looks different, falls differently, perhaps *is felled*; the prospect of the narrator’s fall is pondered, the necessity for a second Samaritan; another plot is hinted at (“You are leaving me”). In the third segment the narrator’s actions in segment 1 are interpreted in the light of an (im)possible love affair, a violence that has not yet (yet already has) happened.

- C10a “Descripción (de una descripción).” Trans. (Span.) Margarita de Orellana. *Vuelta* (Mexico, D.F.) 8.96 (Nov. 1984):19–20.
- C10b “Description (of a Description).” *Harper’s*, Jan. 1985, 32–4.
- C10c “Opis (opisa).” Trans. (Serbo-Croat.) Danila Kiša [Danilo Kiš]. *Putevi* (Banja Luka), 32.4 (July–Aug. 1986):90–5.
- C10d “Description (of a Description).” In *Facing Texts: Encounters between Contemporary Writers and Critics*, edited by Heide Ziegler, 140–3. Durham: Duke Univ. Press, 1988.
- C10e “Description (of a Description).” *TLE: Theorie Littérature enseignement* (Paris) No. 7 (1989):9–12.
- C10f “Description d’une description.” [Trans. (Fr.) Geneviève Moore.] *Lettre internationale* (Paris) No. 26 (Autumn 1990): 23–4.
- C10g “Popis popiso.” Trans. (Czech) Alena Jindrová-Spilarová. *Spisovatelé* (Prague) No. 7 (1992):41.
- C11 “The Letter Scene.” *New Yorker*, 18 Aug. 1986, 24–32.

This summary-defying meditation in forty-five unnumbered segments takes its title (and subject) from “The Letter Scene” portion of Act I, Scene II of Tchaikovsky’s opera *Eugene Onegin*, in which Tatyana, inflamed with ardor, struggles to express her love for Eugene in words, singing as she writes and rewrites the letter she will eventually send him. The relation of love to language is also Sontag’s theme, though it’s played out in a complex weave of voices, some drawn from the news (a Japanese salaryman writes to his family as his jet goes down), others from fiction (Tatyana, etc.), others altogether fictitious (complete with phantom illustrative “figures”). Indeed, Sontag’s Eugene is depicted as writing a letter to his father, an event that does not occur in Tchaikovsky; the trope of an (unexpected) “other” scene is also elaborated in the “Hong Kong Letters” fable in which a poet’s widower receives a packet of (unexpectedly lecherous) letters from her former lover (“Posthumous shock: this is *not* the woman he knew”).

Though many of the paragraphs in C11 can be clearly identified as belonging to one “thread” or another, many are brief and ruminative, almost voiceless (“Letters are sometimes a way of keeping someone at a distance”); others quote from letters, are thus doubly voiced. One is tempted to take the narrational “I” and “me” as Sontag by the inclusion of scenes that recall Sontag’s marriage to (divorce from) Philip Rieff; yet the fragmentary structure allows “I” and “me” to shift, from lover to beloved and back, just as theatrical “roles” can be variously embodied (Sontag’s Tatyana sings, not in Russian, but French; Sontag’s narrator refers to a *particular* performance, by a particular diva). Indeed, the narrational “I” reverses roles and genders, recalling the reversal of fortunes and positions in *Eugene Onegin*. The “I” in the first paragraph is anxious to begin, yet breathlessly hesitant, like Tatyana; much later, “she” breaks up with her Rieff-like husband “face to misery-darkened face,” as Onegin breaks with Tatyana in Tchaikovsky. Yet separation is also (always) an occasion for writing, hence for loving.

C11a “La escena de la carta.” *Letra internacional* [Madrid?] No. 7 (Autumn 1987):5–11.

A Spanish translation of C11.

C11b “A levél-jelenet.” Trans. (Hungarian) László T. András. *Nagyvilág* (Budapest) 33 (June 1988):787–800.

C11c “The Letter Scene.” *Opera Now* (London), May 1989, 46–53.

\*C11d “The Letter Scene.” In *A Common Place Book*, 47. New York: New York Public Library, 1990.

An excerpt from C11, per Sontag.

C12 “The Way We Live Now.” *New Yorker*, 24 Nov. 1986, 42–51. See E29, E36.

Annotated at A27.

- C12a “The Way We Live Now.” In *The Best American Short Stories 1987*, edited by Ann Beattie with Shannon Ravenel, 1–19. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1987.
- C12b “Ainsi vivons-nous maintenant.” Trans. (Fr.) Philippe Blanchard. *Lettre internationale* (Paris) No. 14 (Autumn 1987):59–63.
- C12c “La manera como vivimos ahora.” Trans. (Span.) Eduardo Paz Leston. *La Nación* (Buenos Aires), 22 Feb. 1987, sec. 4a, 1–2.
- C12d “Még él.” Trans. (Hungarian) László T. András. *Nagyvilág* (Budapest) 32 (May 1987):627–40.
- C12e “La manera como vivimos ahora.” Trans. (Span.) Eduardo Paz Leston. *Vuelta* (Mexico, D.F.) 11.127 (June 1987):37–44.
- C12f “Wie wir jetzt leben.” Trans. (Ger.) Jörg Trobitius. *Akzente* (Munich) 34 (Aug. 1987):316–34.
- C12g “Cómo vivimos ahora.” Trans. (Span.) Barbara McShane and Javier Alfaya. *El País Semanal* (Madrid), 6 Sept. 1987, 2–13.
- C12h “Come viviamo ora.” *Lettera internazionale* (Rome) 4.15 (Winter/Jan.-Mar., 1988):59–64.  
An Italian translation of C12.
- C12i “Sådan som vi lever nu.” Trans. (Dan.) Eva Kvorning. *Fredag* (Copenhagen) 18.3 (Aug. 1988):82–96.
- C12j “The Way We Live Now.” In *Our Times: Readings from Recent Periodicals*, edited by Robert Atwan, 128–41. New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1989.
- C12k “The Way We Live Now.” In *The Houghton Mifflin Anthology of Short Fiction*, edited by Patricia Hampl, 1168–79. Boston, 1989.
- C12l “The Way We Live Now.” Arranged for the stage by Edward Parone. In *The Way We Live Now: American Plays and The AIDS Crisis*, edited by M. Elizabeth Osborn, 99–128. New York: Theatre Communications Group, 1990.  
“A Note on Reading this Story” discusses the circumstances and staging of C12, the text of which—apart from Parone’s prefatory note; his subtitle (“A Reading for Five Voices”); the designators “Voice 1,” “Voice 2,” etc.; and the addition of “Scene” numbers for each of C12’s originally unnumbered segments—remains unchanged. Parone used a cast of five, but as *voices*, not as actors; the voices together “provided the feeling of *gathering*” while maintaining the musical “key,” “that curious blend of involvement and removal,” established in Sontag’s original.

- C12m “The Way We Live Now.” In *The Best American Short Stories of the Eighties*, edited by Shannon Ravenel, 252–70. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1990.
- C12n “The Way We Live Now.” In *Our Times/2: Readings from Recent Periodicals*, edited by Robert Atwan, 476–89. Boston: Bedford, St. Martin’s Press, 1991.
- C12o “The Way We Live Now.” In *The Story and Its Writer: An Introduction to Short Fiction*, 3rd ed., edited by Ann Charters, 1180–93. Boston: Bedford, St. Martin’s Press, 1991.
- C12p “The Way We Live Now.” In *Writing and Reading across the Curriculum*, 4th ed., edited by Laurence Behrens and Leonard J. Rosen, 671–87. New York: HarperCollins, 1991.
- C12q “Tak ted’ žijeme.” [Trans. (Czech) Alena Jindrová-Spilarová.] *Lettre internationale* (Prague) No. 2 (Spring 1991):41–4.
- C12r “The Way We Live Now.” In *The Longwood Introduction to Fiction*, edited by Sven Birkerts, 671–84. Boston: Allyn & Bacon, 1992.
- C12s “The Way We Live Now.” In *Literature: The Evolving Canon*, edited by Sven P. Birkerts, 407–18. Boston: Allyn & Bacon, 1993.

C13 “The Very Comical Lament of Pyramus and Thisbe (An Interlude)/Die höchst komische Wehklage von Pyramus und Thisbe (Ein Zwischenspiel).” Trans. (Ger.) Karin Graf. In *Die Endlichkeit der Freiheit Berlin 1990: Ein Ausstellungsprojekt in Ost und West*, edited by Wulf Herzogenrath, Joachim Sartorius, and Christoph Tannert, 10–5. Berlin: Edition Hentrich, 1990.

A revisioning of the Pyramus and Thisbe sketch from *A Midsummer Night’s Dream* in which the absence of a wall—in a Central European city, clearly Berlin—raises questions of desire, of unspoken sentences, of suffering and character, of nostalgia, of difference—West from East, Berkeley from New York, Germany from America, English from German—of memory and history, of economic “freedom” and political responsibility.

- C13a “The Very Comical Lament of Pyramus and Thisbe.” *New Yorker*, 4 March 1991, 30.  
Presumably the English text from which C13 derives.
- C13b “La complainte très comique de Pyrame et Thisbé (un interlude).” Trans. (Fr.) Dominique Rueff. *La règle du jeu* (Paris) No. 4 (May 1991):69–75.  
Translates C13a.
- C13c “Die höchst komische Wehklage von Pyramus und Thisbe.” *Du* (Zurich) No. 7 (July 1991):91, 95.

An introductory note describes the dialogue as written during Sontag's 1990 residency at the Deutschen Akademischen Austauschdienstes in Berlin.

C14 "A Parsifal." In *Robert Wilson's Vision*, by Trevor Fairbrother, 19–27. Boston: Museum of Fine Arts; New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1991.

Sontag's contribution to a catalogue accompanying a retrospective exhibition of works by the theater artist Robert Wilson, "A Parsifal" amounts to a fiercely overdetermined revisioning and foreshortening of Wagner's take on the legend. Amfortas and Gurnemanz, for example, are condensed into a single character, King of Pain, who rides across the stage periodically on a motorized gurney. A new character is added, Ostrich, who seems to have wandered in from Act 7 of Wilson's *The Life and Times of Joseph Stalin*, and whose parable of gazing and hatching, of good eggs and bad, combined with Sontag's directions for staging, weirdly literalizes Wagner's bird imagery while it parodies his (Christian) sexual moralism. Though he repeatedly professes forgetfulness or ignorance, about death among other things (this despite the Uzi he carries and threatens to use), Sontag's Parsifal gives press-conference answers (his glowing red microphone taking the place of Wagner's Holy Grail) as if he were remembering, not Sontag's first scene, but Wagner's first and second acts—in ways that merge Wagner's guilt-ridden Amfortas with himself. In Sontag's version there is little healing or transcendence; Amfortas is not touched with the sacred spear, Klingsor is not magically vanquished, Kundry is not redeemed by Parsifal's innocent purity (far from it). Sontag's Parsifal seeks, instead, a kind of theatrical redemption, a spectacular (Wilsonian) stillness that fends off death by a refusal of movement or closure.

C14a "A Parsifal." *Antaeus* No. 67 (Fall 1991):180–5.  
Slight editorial changes, plus a dedication "For R.W.," indicate that this text was revised subsequent to C14.

C15 "The View from the Ark." In *Violent Legacies: Three Cantos*, by Richard Misrach, 9–12. New York: Aperture, 1992.

*Violent Legacies* has five "chapters": Sontag's short "fiction," followed by three photo essays—on the abandoned air base/test site in Utah where the Enola Gay prepared for Hiroshima, on dead animal pits in the Western deserts, on a shot-up copy of *Playboy* recovered from a nuclear test site in Nevada— followed by an interview with photographer Richard Misrach. The four unnumbered segments of C15 introduce and mirror the four remaining "chapters," a mirror image turned inside out when, in the back-of-the-book acknowledgments, Misrach declares that Sontag's fiction provided "an important framework" for *Violent Legacies*.

C15 begins with an ecstasy-seeking "gloombird" ("I can only report what I see") and "one of the descendants of Noah" ("I don't like hearing bad news all

the time”) discussing the ethics and aesthetics of story telling. A second exchange ponders the relation of pictures and stories, of seeing and knowing, of knowing and caring, of beauty and destruction. In the third exchange the (American) descendent of Noah reports his own experience as messenger to the Ark-dwellers (“They said it’s a cruel world out there”) and the Ark-dweller conviction that artists “don’t understand the iron laws of history,” which link “testosterone and the pleasure of killing.” In the fourth exchange the “persistent” gloombird delivers a (humorless) homily on “two kinds of blindness” and on the ability to do more “than we believe ourselves capable of doing,” as if imagining the possibility of saving the world were the only way to begin the process of saving it.

## SECTION D

### Reviews, Forewords, and Prefaces

D1 Review of H.J.Kaplan, *The Plenipotentiaries*. *Chicago Review* 5.1 (Winter 1950):49–50.

The book-within-a-book novel about Americans in Paris reviewed here uncannily anticipates Sontag's career. The novel's plot—the pedagogical and sexual dance of a younger couple and an older one—prefigures *Duet for Cannibals*. Sontag's voice is here, too: "The Tarskis, having lost the endowment of a felt human past with full powers, conspire to destroy each other, to negate their past and their love in order to create the illusion of defiance, continuity, choice, and make possible the endurance of their love."

D2 "History in the Drama." *Supplement (Columbia Daily Spectator)*, 18 Nov. 1960, 3–4, 8.

Takes Tom F.Driver's *The Sense of History in Greek and Shakespearean Drama* as contributing to the debate between a "Biblical" conception of "linear" time (Hegel, Marx, Tillich) and a "pagan" conception of "cyclical" time (Nietzsche, Spengler, Eliade). By showing how the *Oresteia* and *Hamlet* are each "consistent" with contrary views of time, Driver demonstrates the problem, not only with modes of literary criticism that "blur the fundamental differences between Greek and Shakespearean tragedy," but with a "psychological" orientation to history that declares "the end of ideology" and blames "the political convulsions of the past two centuries" on the "presumptuous energies of Biblical messianism."

D3 "Demons and Dreams." *Partisan Review* 29 (Summer 1962): 460–3.

Reviews I.B.Singer's *The Slave* against the background of "post-classical fiction." Where the modern novel typically projects a world via (as) character psychology, Singer's "power of sensuous evocation" brings worldly things to life "in their marvelous abundance and rightness of juxtaposition." Where Singer's evocative power results from "the unfailing assurance" with which he moves in the world of Polish Jewry he depicts, his characters are also, as it were, "pre-modern," in that their motives are conscious, collective, and traditional. But where Singer normally emphasizes "demonic" motives and appetites, in *The Slave* "God has the last word." Though this involves the sacrifice of "a certain exotic intensity," Sontag hopes that the book might "renew our capacities for emotional catharsis" in a way "post-classical" fiction no longer can.

D3a “Demons and Dreams.” In *Twentieth-Century American Literature*, Vol. 6, The Chelsea House Library of Literary Criticism, edited by Harold Bloom, 3678–9. New York, 1987.

D4 “Death and Art and the Utility of Despair.” *Second Coming* 1.4 (June 1962): 46–50. See [A26](#).

Annotated at [A2](#) as “The Artist as Exemplary Sufferer,” though D4 includes an introductory paragraph and a few sentences absent from [A2](#).

D4a Excerpts. In *Modern Romance Literatures*, A Library of Literary Criticism, edited by Dorothy Nyren Curley and Arthur Curley, 337–8. New York: Frederick Ungar Publishing Co., 1967.

D4b Excerpts. In *Twentieth-Century Literary Criticism*, Vol. 3, edited by Sharon K. Hall, 338–9. Detroit: Gale Research, 1980.

D5 “Simone Weil.” *New York Review of Books*, “Special Issue” (1963):22. See [A18](#).

The text annotated at [A2](#) lacks three paragraphs from the end of D5, to the effect that, though *Selected Essays 1934–43* displays Weil “somewhat marginally,” her “person” (“excruciatingly identical with her ideas”) is nonetheless present. Worth noting is Sontag’s critique of “the vindictive parallels” Weil “draws between Nazism, Rome, and Israel,” as if “all forms of state authority” were equally suspect.

D5a “Simone Weil.” In *The Bold New Woman*, edited by Barbara Alson, 183–6. Greenwich, CT: Fawcett Publications, 1966.  
Reprints the [A2](#) text.

D5b “Simone Weil.” In *The Bold New Woman*, rev. ed., edited by Barbara Alson Wasserman, 215–8. Greenwich, CT: Fawcett Publications, 1970.  
Reprints the [A2](#) text.

D5c “Simone Weil.” In *Women’s Voices: Visions and Perspectives*, edited by Pat C. Hoy II, Esther H. Schor, and Robert DiYanni, 361–2. New York: McGraw-Hill, 1990.  
Reprints the [A2](#) text.

D6 “The Death of Tragedy.” *Partisan Review* 30 (Spring 1963): 122–8.

Includes a final paragraph—listing virtues of *Metatheatre* left untouched for lack of space—deleted from [A2](#).

D7 “The Flowers of Evil.” *Partisan Review* 30 (Fall 1963):441–6.

Annotated at [A2](#) as “Sartre’s *Saint Genet*.”

D7a Excerpts. In *Contemporary Literary Criticism*, Vol. 4, edited by Carolyn Riley, 475. Detroit: Gale Research, 1975.

D8 “Virginia Is a State of Mind.” *Book Week (New York Herald Tribune)*, 15 Sept. 1963, 18, 28.

Praises Yves Berger’s *The Garden* as “an interior meditation” in the *nouveau roman* mode of “systematic derangement,” though it is also “a philosophical romance on the grandest of themes—time and timelessness, the link between the acceptance of mortality and the ability to live....” Writer and main character alike are fascinated by “Southern writers” (Faulkner, Caldwell) or Southern life—the novel’s French title is *Le Sud*—and the book the narrator is writing during the story turns out to be the book we are reading. “The European romance about things American has had no more intricate tribute than this jewel and conundrum of a first novel.”

D9 “A Voluptuary’s Catechism.” *Book Week (New York Herald Tribune)*, 6 Oct. 1963, 6, 21.

Employs the analogy of writing, sexuality, and religion to review Genet’s *Our Lady of the Flowers* as an exercise in “sensation,” masturbatory, imaginative, “shamelessly aesthetic.” Yet, though “avowedly written out of physical pleasure, and exalting acts of terrible cruelty and the most perverse sexuality, it does not excite sexually, but spiritually.”

D9a Excerpts. In *Modern Romance Literatures*, A Library of Literary Criticism, edited by Dorothy Nyren Curley and Arthur Curley, 187. New York: Frederick Ungar Publishing Co., 1967.

D10 “Muriel ou Le Temps d’un Retour.” *Film Quarterly* 17.2 (Winter 1963–1964):23–7. See [A8](#).

The text annotated at [A2](#) as “Resnais’s *Muriel*” differs considerably from [D10](#). Only three of the original’s last five paragraphs are retained in the book version, one of these (or a large part of it) as a long footnote; the two that remain come in reversed order, thus placing greater emphasis on the “political” or “historical” aspect of Resnais’s failure in *Muriel* than is found in [D10](#), which emphasizes the film’s “formal” shortcomings, its lack of “sensuousness,” despite Sontag’s [D10](#) acknowledgment that she is “fundamentally out of sympathy” with “the formalist aesthetic.” Also dropped from the book version is an extended passage comparing “director’s films and star films,” to the effect that Delphine Seyrig’s strong performance in *Muriel* is a throwback to Hollywood.

D10a Excerpts. In *Contemporary Literary Criticism*, Vol. 16, edited by Sharon R. Gunton, 501–2. Detroit: Gale Research, 1981.

D11 “Gogol’s Grandson.” *New York Review of Books*, 23 Jan. 1964, 14–6.

Describes Tommaso Landolfi's "intellectually playful, sardonic" sensibility and narrative style by contrast with Borges, Dinesen, and Kafka. "In a typical Landolfi story, the mind is confronted with a brute fact," often the physical body itself, which "the mind circles around," "unable to penetrate it." Most of the review's last paragraph—praising Landolfi's "reserved," "transparent" style, as against the "grossly rhetorical" style of much American writing—appears as a long footnote to the [A2](#) version of "The Artist as Exemplary Sufferer."

*D11a* Excerpts. In *Modern Romance Literatures*, A Library of Literary Criticism, edited by Dorothy Nyren Curley and Arthur Curley, 254. New York: Frederick Ungar Publishing Co., 1967.

D12 "Odd Man Out." *New York Review of Books*, 5 Mar. 1964, 11–2.

Annotated at [A2](#) as "Michel Leiris' *Manhood*," though the closing remarks on "boredom" are less developed in [D12](#).

*D12a* Excerpts. In *Modern French Literatures*, Vol. 2, A Library of Literary Criticism, edited by Debra Popkin and Michael Popkin, 30–1. New York: Frederick Ungar Publishing Co., 1977.

*D12b* Foreword to *Manhood: A Journey from Childhood into the Fierce Order of Virility*, by Michel Leiris, vii–xiv. Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1992.  
Reprints the [A2](#) text.

D13 "A New Life for an Old One." *New York Times Book Review*, 5 Apr. 1964, 5.

Describes John Hawkes's *Second Skin* as "about horror surmounted by lushness and love." Compares his treatment "of the theme of a man shedding an old life for a more joyous and sensual one" to Bernard Malamud's more limitedly realistic treatment of similar material in *A New Life*; Hawkes "does not just report the facts of vigor and renewal; his style enacts them." Because Hawkes allows details to "proliferate," however, he tends to understate violent emotions, to dramatize the periphery rather than the center, which makes his (considerable) accomplishment "small scale, less than great."

*D13a* "Review of *Second Skin*." In *The Merrill Studies in Second Skin*, edited by John Graham, 3–5. Columbus, OH: Charles E. Merrill Publishing Co., 1971.

*D13b* Excerpts. In *Twentieth-Century American Literature*, Vol. 3, The Chelsea House Library of Literary Criticism, edited by Harold Bloom, 1727–8. New York, 1987.

D14 “A Feast for Open Eyes.” *Nation*, 13 Apr. 1964, 374–6.

As annotated at [A2](#) as “Jack Smith’s *Flaming Creatures*,” except that the book version lacks a long [D14](#) passage comparing *Flaming Creatures* to Genet’s *Chant d’Amour*. Though Smith’s work is not, like Genet’s, pornographic—not having “the power to excite sexually”—that power requires no apology, especially in the case of avant-garde works having limited audiences. “Art is, always, the sphere of freedom.”

*D14a* “Jack Smith’s *Flaming Creatures*.” In *The New American Cinema: A Critical Anthology*, edited by Gregory Battcock, 204–10. New York: E.P.Dutton & Co.; Toronto: Clarke, Irwin & Co., 1967.

Reprints the [A2](#) text.

*D14b* “Susan Sontag über Flaming Creatures.” Trans. (Ger.) Mark W.Rien. *Film Kritik* [Munich?], July 1968, 478–82.

Translates the [A2](#) text.

D15 “Ionesco: The Theater of the Banal.” *New York Review of Books*, 9 July 1964, 9–11.

Annotated at [A2](#) as “Ionesco.”

*D15a* Excerpts. In *Contemporary Literary Criticism*, Vol. 4, edited by Carolyn Riley, 251. Detroit: Gale Research, 1975.

D16 “Laughter in the Dark.” *New York Times Book Review*, 25 Oct. 1964, 5.

Reviews *Cabot Wright Begins*. Adduces James “Purdy the satirist and fantasist; Purdy the gentle naturalist of American, particularly small-town American, life; and Purdy the writer of vignettes or sketches, which give us a horrifying snapshot image of helpless people destroying each other.” Prefers this antirealistic Purdy to the others, and judges *Cabot Wright Begins* as less successful on this account than *Malcolm*.

*D16a* Excerpts. In *Twentieth-Century American Literature*, Vol. 6, The Chelsea House Library of Literary Criticism, edited by Harold Bloom, 3248–9. New York, 1987.

D17 Vogue’s Notebook: Theatre (“In London: *Inadmissible Evidence*, ‘Shallow, Exhibitionistic, Fragmented’”). *Vogue*, 15 Aug. 1965, 51–2.

Praises John Osborne for releasing “a new energy (based on vituperation and diatribe)” into the “well-made” tradition of English theater, though she finds a London production of *Inadmissible Evidence*, in part by contrast with Arthur Miller’s *After the Fall*, to be “shallow, exhibitionistic, fragmented.”

D18 “Transmitting His Master’s Voice.” *Book Week (Washington Post)*, 3 Apr. 1966, 2–3, 12–3.

Reviews *A Psycho-Analytic Dialogue: The Letters of Sigmund Freud and Karl Abraham, 1907–1926* by asking why Freud chose to see psychoanalysis as science rather than an art. The implicit answer is that science is necessarily “corporate,” a matter of shared “work”; whereas art, always “tied to its origin in the search for pleasure,” is not (though it may be). A loyal “disciple” who shared Freud’s work and (Jewish) culture was Karl Abraham, though his contribution to Freud’s project was slighted by Ernest Jones. The Freud/Abraham correspondence reveals “the distinctive style and assumptions” they shared, despite their differences. As McLuhan’s example makes clear (his “meandering, patchwork” exposition being “inseparable from [his] antipathy to the values of ‘literature’”), “tone or manner” is not arbitrary. Freud’s “style proposes a dominant metaphor—that of a map—which underpins the psychoanalytic ideas.” And with the shared trope of unexplored terrain go certain values (“courage, ingenuity, patience”; “clarity,” “austerity”) that Abraham and Freud also held in common.

D19 Introduction to *The Temptation to Exist*, by E.M.Cioran, 7–29. Chicago: Quadrangle Books, 1968. See [A15j](#).

Annotated at [A5](#) as “Thinking Against Oneself”: Reflections on Cioran.” The [A5](#) text combines [D19](#) segments 3 and 4, also 19 and 20, yielding a total of eighteen segments.

*D19a* “On Cioran.” *TriQuarterly* No. 11 (Winter 1968):5–20.

\**D19b* Introduction to *The Temptation to Exist*, by E.M.Cioran, 7–29. Chicago: Quadrangle Paperback, 1970.

*D19c* Introduction to *The Temptation to Exist*, by E.M.Cioran, 7–29. New York: Seaver Books, 1986.

*D19d* Introduction to *The Temptation to Exist*, by E.M.Cioran, 7–29. London: Quartet Encounters, 1987.

D20 Preface to *Writing Degree Zero*, by Roland Barthes, vii–xxi. New York: Hill & Wang, 1968.

Comprises three unnumbered segments.

(1) Observes the “obvious injustice” of describing Barthes as a literary critic or *Writing Degree Zero* as “representative.”

(2) Locates Barthes’s first book by reference to its European context, in which “difficult” (avant-garde) texts are regarded as canonical and the relation between politics and literature is subject to “vigorous debate.” Barthes “challenges” Sartre’s *What Is Literature?* contention that literary prose (vs. poetry) is ethically bound “to the task of communicating,” a matter of social “engagement” in which “style” is taken as optional or personal. Against this “what vs. how” dichotomy Barthes urges “the triad of language, style, and ‘writing,’” in which writing

(*écriture*) is seen as a mode of language functioning (formally) *as* literature, neither completely social nor completely personal. Because the writer can't predictably or permanently "place literature at the service" of a cause, his choice to write in a particular way "is a matter of 'conscience, not of efficacy.'" Sartre's attack on avantgarde works is thus crude. Though Barthes defends writers who aspire to a "zero degree" writing, to literature's "abolition," he treats the zero-degree notion itself as a "boundary-concept," as a site where competing literary claims are mediated via critical discourse.

(3) Observes how Barthes's tone, partly anthropological, partly historical, distances the disputes, allowing him "to describe literature as a process," as having a rise/fall shape. Takes [Part Two](#) of *Writing Degree Zero* as more readerly, less polemical. Though [Part One](#) "suggests more of Barthes' later [structuralist] thinking," he is finally less anthropological than polemical in using the myth of *écriture* "for the purpose of analyzing a myth, that of 'literature.'" Until "art" itself is demystified, and because "only new myths can subdue...the old myths," the myths "proposed in *Writing Degree Zero* seem to [Sontag] sturdy, subtle, and highly serviceable."

D20a Preface to *Writing Degree Zero and Elements of Semiology*, by Roland Barthes, xi-xxv. Boston: Beacon Press, 1970.

D20b Excerpts. In *Contemporary Literary Criticism*, Vol. 24, edited by Sharon R. Gunton, 26–8. Detroit: Gale Research, 1983.

D21 "Posters: Advertisement, Art, Political Artifact, Commodity." In *The Art of Revolution*, edited by Dugald Stermer, vii-xxiii. New York: McGraw-Hill, 1970.

(Stermer's book was published in ten [mostly European] venues, by arrangement with McGraw-Hill, all but the 1971 Finnish edition in 1970. As McGraw-Hill cannot confirm full bibliographic data on Sontag's contribution to the project, we list only those editions to which we have had direct access.)

Comprises three numbered segments.

(1) Contrasts the poster to the public notice by reference to "the modern concept of the public" (defined as passive consumers who must be "grabbed" or "seduced") and of public space (understood as "an arena of signs," hence the dominance of "visual or plastic elements"). Though early posters were openly "commercial," they "achieved the status of 'art'" quite rapidly, due to the participation of such artists as Toulouse-Lautrec and Beardsley, and also because they "exist in multiples," hence carry no "aura" (in Benjamin's sense) of uniqueness. Posters are an "applied" art in the sense that "they apply what has already been done in the other arts," are in that sense parasitic, following style or taste rather than setting it. The trend toward "quotation" confirms the "aesthetic thrust" of the poster, its as-if silent effectiveness beyond or apart from its ostensible "message." Besides their "decorative" role in cosmopolitan life, posters are aesthetically inclined in the direction of irony and wit by their role in

advertising “marginal” or (literally) “theatrical” products. Though patriotic posters appeared during World War I, their advent was no less than that of commercial posters tied to the nation-state “matrix” of modern capitalism. Where commercial posters generally indicate “the degree to which a society defines itself as stable,” mobilizing political posters indicate “that the society considers itself in a state of emergency.” The “aesthetic and intellectual quality” of political posters has no limits “separate from the conventions that affect (and perhaps limit) all poster-making,” the necessity of “stimulating and simplifying” through “a visual metaphor,” the attractively “pretty girl” or the admonitory “heroic figure.” Words generally “second the image.”

(2) Takes Cuba as no less “a network of signs” than the hypersaturated milieu of urban capitalism, though the pedagogical role of the poster in Cuba is one of “firing moral sympathies, rather than promoting private appetites,” which amounts to “a revolution in consciousness.” “Cuban political posters are not typical” of political posters generally, which are rarely avantgarde. By contrast with French posters circa May 1968, Cuban posters “convey complex moral ideas” and show a “taste for... understatement” in ways that “express (through being beautiful) *pleasure* at certain ideas, moral attitudes, and ennobling historical references.” This relative autonomy is evidenced especially (paradoxically) in the “gratuitous” posters announcing cultural events that will sell out regardless. Attributes the energy of Cuban poster art to the medium’s capacity for “reconciling” (blurring, suspending) the antagonism between views of art as “individual sensibility” and as serving “a social-political or ethical aim”—because the poster is already public and political. By contrast with the critical role of the artist in “a prerevolutionary situation,” that of the artist “in a revolutionary society” is “always problematic,” if only because serious and avant-garde art have already coopted “the rhetoric of revolution.” “Virtually all the leaders of the great political revolutions,” moreover, “have failed to see the connection” between “revolutionary ideas in art and revolutionary ideas in politics.” Because of the equivocal treatment of poets and architects in Cuba, the less repressive experience of Cuban poster artists may do “no more than perpetuate” the bourgeois values of “liveliness and openness” by “democratizing” them. By Gramsci’s standard, Cuban posters do “not embody radically new values,” though they are “*critical* values” in the sense of opposing “the vulgar commerciality of American poster art” and “the drab ugliness of Soviet socialist realism.” Avows Cuban posters *are* revolutionary in promoting internationalism. Though an older generation of artists (in music, for example) responds to Cuba’s history of cultural underdevelopment by seeking out nationalistic or “folkloric” themes, poster and film artists, lacking a pre-revolutionary tradition, have taken “Becoming international” as “Cuba’s indigenous path to cultural revolution”—by contrast to the “program of most fascist regimes,” which seeks to “purify” and “glorify” nationalist culture. “Spectacle,” a “favorite public art form” for both left and right revolutionaries, is replaced in Cuba by “the fascination with the scenario of revolutionary action,”

regardless of whether the work in question is produced collectively or not. In attaching “the sense of moral responsibility to an *increasing* number of issues,” to Hiroshima as well as Vietnam, Cuban posters provide a sense of “spaciousness” and “extravagance.”

(3) Takes poster art’s lack of exemption from the “iron rule of cooption” as typical of revolutionary art under capitalism. By contrast with the habits of early poster-collectors, the contemporary interest in poster art is “a mass addiction” that is “ostentatiously international,” related to “the modern phenomenon of mass tourism.” But where a tourist photograph is “parasitic,” the poster is “meta-parasitic,” a substitute experience, which can become “a form of cultural boasting,” even when the juxtaposition of various kinds of posters becomes a coded “lexicon of nostalgia and irony.” Like tourism, poster collecting “is a way of anthologizing the world” such that “one emotion or loyalty tends to cancel out another,” miniaturizing the world, reducing its allure and capacity to disturb. As does *The Art of Revolution*.

- D21a* “Carteles: Anuncio, arte, artefacto político, comodidad.” Trans. (Span.) Nancy Garst de Rocha. In *El arte en la revolución: Cuba y Castro 1959–1970*, edited by Dugald Stermer, 5–22. Mexico: Libros McGraw-Hill de México, 1970.
- D21b* “Plakate: Werbung, Kunst, politisches Artefakt, Ware.” Trans. (Ger.) Margaret Carroux. In *Kunst der Revolution: 100 Plakate aus Kuba*, edited by Dugald Stermer, 5–22. Cologne: Kiepenheuer & Witsch, 1970.
- D21c* “Posters: Advertisement, Art, Political Artifact, Commodity.” In *The Art of Revolution: 96 Posters from Cuba*, edited by Dugald Stermer, vii–xxiii. London: Pall Mall Press, 1970.
- D21d* “Plakater: Reklame, kunst, propaganda, handelsvare.” Trans. (Dan.) Uffe Harder. *Louisiana Revy* (Humblebæk) No. 3–4 (Apr. 1970):5–20.
- D21e* “The Cuban Poster.” *Art Forum* 9.2 (Oct. 1970):56–63. Reprints segment 2 of [D21](#).
- D21f* “Bill Stickers Will Not Be Prosecuted.” *Observer* [color supplement], 25 Oct. 1970, 26–30, 32. Reprints segment 2 of [D21](#), severely abridged.
- D22* “Reflections: Approaching Artaud.” *New Yorker*, 19 May 1973, 39–44, 46, 48, 51–2, 54, 57–8, 60, 62–4, 67–8, 70, 72–4, 76, 78–9. See [A11a–d](#).  
Differs from “Artaud” ([A11](#)) only slightly.
- D22a* Excerpts. In *Twentieth-Century Literary Criticism*, Vol. 3, edited by Sharon K.Hall, 56–9. Detroit: Gale Research, 1980.

D23 Introduction to *Portraits in Life and Death*, by Peter Hujar. New York: De Capo Press, 1976.

Comprises two unnumbered segments. (1) Describes photography as embodying “a ‘romantic’ relation to reality,” effecting a double displacement that makes “the familiar appear strange, the marvelous appear commonplace.” Photography both creates and decreates, converting the world alternately into a department store and a cemetery. The “sex-appeal” of photographic death is especially evident when still photographs are included within a movie, as in Robert Siodmak’s *Menschen am Sonntag*. (2) Cites the “premonitory link” between Hujar’s work and her own by reference to [A1](#) and [A3](#); Hujar’s photographs of the Palermo Catacombs directly inspired “the oneiric landscape” of *Death Kit*’s last scene. Takes Hujar’s photos of “fleshed and moist-eyed friends” (Sontag included) as meditating on “the art of dying,” a claim as-if confirmed by the catacomb “portraits” that follow.

*D23a* People Are Talking about... (“Photographic Life/Death”).  
*Vogue*, Sept. 1976, 348–9.

D24 “The Last Intellectual.” *New York Review of Books*, 12 Oct. 1978, 75–82.  
See [A18](#), [A21](#), [A26](#).

Annotated at [A15](#) as “Under the Sign of Saturn,” though a number of passages marking [D24](#) as a review of Benjamin’s *Reflections* are not included in the [A15](#) text; also deleted from the reprint are most of the (unusually many) [D24](#) footnotes.

*D24a* Introduction to *One Way Street and Other Writings*, by Walter Benjamin, 7–28. London: NLB, 1979.

Language not in [D24](#) though present in [A15](#) is present here, but so too are most of the [D24](#) footnotes.

*D24b* “Walter Benjamin: El último intelectual.” Trans. (Span.) Tomás Segovia. *Vuelta* (Mexico, D.F.) 3.30 (May 1979): 4–12.

*D24c* “Sous le signe de Saturne.” Trans. (Fr.) Brigitte Legars. *Cahiers critiques de la littérature* (Sept. 1979): 14–25.

Translates the [A15](#) text; all footnotes are dropped.

*D24d* Excerpt. In *Encyclopedia of World Literature in the Twentieth Century*, rev. ed., Vol. 1, edited by Leonard S. Klein, 243. New York: Frederick Ungar Publishing, 1981.

*D24e* “Walter Benjamin, bajo el signo de saturno.” *Quimera* (Barcelona) No. 58 [1986?]: 18–27.

A Spanish translation of the [A15](#) text.

*D24f* “Walter Benjamin: El último intelectual.” Trans. (Span.) Tomás Segovia. *Vuelta sudamericana* (Buenos Aires) No. 1 (Aug. 1986): 13–21.

Reprints [D24b](#).

D24g “Danxiang jie.” *Qing xing/Tendency Quarterly* (Hong Kong) No. 1 (1993):121–40.  
A Chinese translation of D24. (The D24g footnote apparatus might run to p. 142, though we cannot be sure.)

D25 “Eye of the Storm.” *New York Review of Books*, 21 Feb. 1980, 36–43. See A18.

Published as a joint review of *Hitler, A Film from Germany* and the German-language edition of the screenplay—soon “To be published in English by Farrar, Straus & Giroux”—“Eye of the Storm” is for the most part identical to “Syberberg’s Hitler” as annotated at A15. The *New York Review* version is laid out in fourteen segments; the A15 text has seven. And the book version adds five paragraphs: a new first paragraph, a paragraph on the film’s science-fiction affiliations near the end of the book’s sixth segment, plus three paragraphs of new matter leading off the book’s final segment. Some additional sentence-level changes are evident as well.

D25a “Syberbergs Hitler.” Trans. (Ger.) Kurt Neff. In *Syberbergs Hitler-Film*, 7–32. Munich: Hanser, 1980.  
Translates the A15 text.

\*D25b “Aventure dans la tête.” Trans. (Fr.) Serge Daney and Dominique Villain. *Cahiers du cinéma*, hors-série, No. 6 (Feb. 1980):93–5.  
Translates excerpts from D25 or A15; is accompanied, per Sontag, by a letter she wrote to Syberberg, used without her permission.

D25c Preface to *Hitler, A Film from Germany*, by Hans-Jürgen Syberberg, ix–xvi. Manchester: Carcanet New Press, 1982.  
Reprints A15 segments 1, 2, 4, and 7.

D25d Preface to *Hitler, A Film from Germany*, by Hans-Jürgen Syberberg, ix–xvi. New York: FS&G; Toronto: McGraw-Hill Ryerson, 1982.  
Reprints A15 segments 1, 2, 4, and 7.

D26 “An Art of Passage/Un’arte di quel che passa/Kunst des Vorüber-gangs.” Trans. (Ital.) Paolo Milano; (Ger.) Gerhard Friedrich Becker Gelf. In *Diario per immagini*, by Marilù Eustachio, 7, 9. Bologna: Spatia Books, 1981.

This tri-lingual poetic triptych effectively mimes the graphic “diary” it describes. Eustachio’s “art of passage” renders “the real, conceived as irregular, patternless, ceaseless change,” by working in theme-and-variation series, thus conveying “the appropriate sense of radical continuity” while suggesting “a narrative that has been suppressed.” Takes the pictorial entries as challenging “the very idea of depiction” by seeking the “edge of appearance,” by

“shadowing” its “half-blurred tracks.” By tracing, collecting, Eustachio literally leaves (and covers) “traces.” Thus is her diary especially, gracefully “discreet,” concealing “its own obsessional sources.” Art thus becomes “good taste,” “appetitive,” “skeptical.”

D27 “Walser’s Voice.” In *Selected Stories*, by Robert Walser, vii–ix. New York: FSG; Toronto: McGraw-Hill Ryerson, 1982.

(According to Sontag, she initiated the publication of, and effectively edited, this collection of Walser’s stories.)

Praises Walser’s heroically “anti-heroic” and “miniaturist” prose by comparing Walser to other European artists and writers—Klee, Beckett, Kleist, Kafka—but then rejects that tactic, as Walser conquers the romantic specter of “The important” by declaring it “unimportant,” in favor of adducing Walser’s own voice, delivered via citation. “The moral core of Walser’s art is the refusal of power; of domination.” His irony charged with compassion, Walser’s is an “anti-gravity writing, in praise of movement and sloughing off, weightlessness.”

D27a “Walser’s Voice.” In *Selected Stories*, by Robert Walser, vii–ix. Manchester: Carcanet New Press, 1982.

D27b “Robert Walser: A Wonderful, Heartbreaking Writer—Rediscovered.” *Vogue*, Oct. 1982, 570–1, 600.

D27c “Walser’s Voice.” In *Selected Stories*, by Robert Walser, vii–ix. New York: Vintage, Random House, 1983.

D27d Excerpts. In *Twentieth-Century Literary Criticism*, Vol. 18, edited by Dennis Poupard and James E. Person, Jr., 437–8. Detroit: Gale Research, 1985.

D27e “Walser’s Voice.” In *The Walk*, by Robert Walser, vii–ix. London: Serpent’s Tail, 1992.

D28 “Writing Itself: On Roland Barthes.” *New Yorker*, 26 Apr. 1982, 122–4, 127–34, 137–41. See [A18](#).

As annotated at [A17](#), though the book version contains two footnotes—one relating the distinction between “exclusivist” and “inclusivist” versions of dandyism to “camp,” the other noting how Barthes shifted the burden of modernism from writer to reader—lacking in [D28](#).

D28a “Barthes par Sontag: Un promeneur solitaire.” [Trans. (Fr.) Philippe Blanchard.] *Les nouvelles littéraires* (Paris), 23–29 Sept. 1982, 44–5.

Described as excerpted from [A17b](#); the passages are derived from [D28](#) segments 1, 3, and 4.

D28b “Scrivere.” Trans. (Ital.) Francesca Romana Wagner. *Nuovi argomenti* (Rome), 3d ser., No. 4 (Oct.–Dec. 1982):104–18.

- D28c* “La escritura misma: Sobre Roland Barthes.” Trans. (Span.) Eduardo Goligorsky. In *Ensayos críticos*, by Roland Barthes, 333–63. Barcelona: Seix Barral, 1983.  
Translates the [A17](#) version of “Writing Itself.”
- D28d* “La escritura misma: A propósito de Roland Barthes.” *Eco* (Bogota) 44.5 (Mar. 1984):449–78.  
This alternative Spanish translation of the [A17](#) version of “Writing Itself” collapses segment 3 into segment 2.
- D28e* “Pisanje kao takvo: O Rolandu Barthesu.” Trans. (SerboCroat.) Bojan Korenić. *Izraz* (Sarajevo) 59.1–2 (Jan.-Feb. 1986):1–19.  
Translates the [A17](#) text.

*D29* “A Poet’s Prose.” In *A Captive Spirit: Selected Prose*, by Marina Tsvetaeva, edited by J. Marin King, 15–21. London: Virago Press, 1983.

Comprises three unnumbered segments.

(1) Compares the influence on Western culture of nineteenth- and twentieth-century Russian literature. Where the former “was an achievement of prose writers,” the latter is “an achievement of poets.” Pasternak aside, most latter-day Russian poets see poetry as embodying (per Sontag) the Romantic “ideal of intensity, absolute candour, nobility, heroism”—to the extent of praising great prose as (per Brodsky) “the continuation of poetry with other means.”

(2) Invokes Valéry, Brodsky, and Stein to confirm the “thinness” of poetry as compared to the bulk of prose, its marginalization as something “more special.” Indeed, since the era of Goethe and Pushkin, one is defined as a poet by willingly renouncing prose—except, perhaps, for criticism, which does less to compromise a writer’s claim to the status of poet. Even the modernist ambition to write lyrically complete prose exacerbates the “two-party system” that puts prose on the defensive, as poetry’s opposite.

(3) Where the cultural criticism of Eliot, Auden, or Paz is not written in the “elliptical” prose typical of contemporary poets, that of Mandelstam and Tsvetaeva is, with Tsvetaeva’s being “a purer example” in its narrower focus on “the growth of the poet’s vocation.” Two genres are typical of “poet’s prose,” the autobiography, and the memoiristic portrait, often of another writer, the latter complementing the former, evoking “the standards by which the self is to be judged”—as in Tsvetaeva’s memoir of Max Voloshin. Such writing distinguishes “the poet self and “the daily self” from which the poet “emerges” in triumph and ardor. Perhaps because “Poet’s prose is typically elegiac, retrospective,” the present selection focuses on Tsvetaeva’s late writings, though “All of Tsvetaeva’s work is an argument for rapture,” for “Promethean” genius.

*D29a* “A Poet’s Prose.” *TLS*, 9 Sept. 1983, 953.

- Drops roughly three segment 1 paragraphs of [D29](#).
- D29b* “The Autobiography of Ardor.” *Vanity Fair*, Oct. 1983, 90–2.  
Drops (most of) the last three paragraphs of [D29](#).
- D29c* “Marina Zwatajewa: Die Prosa einer Dichterin.” Trans. (Ger.) Hans-Horst Henschen. *Akzente* (Munich) 31 (June 1984):233–40.

D30 “Certain Mapplethorpes.” In *Certain People: A Book of Portraits*, by Robert Mapplethorpe. Pasadena: Twelvetreets Press, 1985.

Describes the “apprehension” of being photographed, the out-looking “facer” being “faced,” experiencing her face as a mask, herself as *behind* it. Where erotic looks are (ideally) “reciprocal,” those of subject and photographer are asymmetrical; the latter’s “is sightless, generic: the look that discerns Form.” Ascribes her amateurishness before the camera to a refusal “to take in the fact that I not only look, but have a look, look good (or bad)...” Emphasizes the *difference* in Mapplethorpe’s photographs (of her)—the difference between herself and her image, between her non-erotic response to her own image and the fantasy potential in photographs of others. A key difference is Mapplethorpe’s “including himself as subject” among others in the book, declining a “god-like distance” or “power.” In his emphasis on cooperation, on “posing,” Mapplethorpe’s relation to his subjects is nonpredatory, nonvoyeuristic. As a subject, he seeks his own “self-confidence” or “certainty.” As a photographer, he acknowledges otherness (his subjects are “certain in the sense of [being] some, and not others”) and encourages certainty, in “the sense of [being] self-confident, sure, clear.”

- D30a* “Sontag on Mapplethorpe.” *Vanity Fair*, July 1985, 68–72.  
Reprints [D30](#), though much reworded, in three unnumbered segments.

D31 “La cosmopolis del exilado.” In *Vudú urbano*, by Edgardo Cozarinsky, 7–9. Barcelona: Editorial Anagrama, 1985.

Describes *Vudú urbano* as a “cosmopolitan” book, and very Argentine in its Borgesian Anglophilia. *Vudú urbano* is culturally “displaced” in not having “a single ‘original’ language.” It combines genres—at once a “semi-hallucinatory depiction” à la Baudelaire and Breton of “the irreducible strangeness of modern city life” and a “treatise on exile” in the “fast” form of “the post-card,” simultaneously montage and quotation, as befits a Godardian “filmmaker turned writer.” Cozarinsky’s “retroactive” anticipations of “illicit” cosmopolitan desires evoke “finitude” and require writerly “voodoo” both to “heighten” and “exorcise them.”

- D31a* "The Exile's Cosmopolis." *Sites* (New York) No. 13 (1985): 36–7.  
The copyright page of *Vudú urbano* indicates that "The Exile's Cosmopolis" was copyrighted, under the English title, in 1985, hence *D31a* is probably the original.
- D31b* "Cosmopolis de l'exilé." Trans. (Fr.) Edgardo Cozarinsky, Anabel Herbout, and Denise Laroutis. In *Vaudou urbain*, 7–11. Paris: Christian Bourgeois Éditeur, 1989.
- D31c* "The Exile's Cosmopolis." In *Urban Voodoo*, by Edgardo Cozarinsky, 7–9. New York: Lumen Books, 1990.

*D32* "Fragments of an Aesthetic of Melancholy." In "*Veruschka*": *Transfigurations*, by Vera Lehndorff and Holger Trülzsch, 6–12. London: Thames & Hudson, 1986.

This poetic meditation on the causality and imagery of melancholy is beyond summary in its serial evocation-cum-introduction of this anthology of photos staged by the model-cum-actress "Veruschka" and the painter-sculptor-photographer Holger Trülzsch. An exclamatory sentence attributing melancholy to the anthology photos is followed by eleven numbered segments each beginning with "Because." (1) Of their exhibiting "a compendium of desires—contrasting, contradicting; impacted, immobilizing." To "become dematerialized"; "to become matter only." (2) Of "the self-conscious density of their artistic strategies," a "self-effacement" that is literally "spectacular" and egotistical, a self-effacement realized not only by themes of impersonation and disappearance via painting-as-camouflage but also in being "a full-scale collaboration rather than the work of a single artist." (3) Of their ambivalently "hyperbolic consummation" of the concept and subject of artifice—the "hyper-artifice" of clothes or celebrity identities painted on Lehndorff's naked body, the Surrealist artifice of juxtaposing a found environment and a model painted to match. But where the theatricality of fashion photography depicts action "caught in mid-course," the acts of metamorphosis recorded in these photo-tableaux are terminated, immutable, monstrous. (4) Of their "testing of beauty— through artifice, through distortion." (5) Of their "excess, violence," their "morbidity," as if "to paint clothes on a naked body suggests a flaying" and "painting a wall on it suggests an entombment." (6) Of their dedication to bodily exhibition even while evoking mutilation or discipline, "a kind of visual sci-fi" that is the "opposite of pornography" in rendering a body "beyond desire," genderless, yet "irrefutably sexual." Though dependent, like "all imagery close to Surrealism," on "hoary" sexual stereotypes, these photographs avoid making a sexual object of "Veruschka" by virtue "of the total literalness of her objectification," as if photographic objectification "might tend logically to produce its opposite," a sovereign subjectivity. (7) Of miming "complex spiritual exercise," "correctly passive," yet "saturated with the will," faked, yet "rigorously truthful," open-

ended, yet suicidal. (8) Of seeking a “material” or formal being, a “wish to *be* form,” not via excessive operatic expressiveness but via “maximum inexpressiveness.” (9) Of making “the conquest of eros (a beautiful woman) by thanatos” vividly “seductive,” as betokening an implicit “proliferation” and an “ardent relation to the world.” (10) Of shifting from the satire of impersonation to solemn allegories of “time’s ruins” by incorporating abandoned “commercial and industrial spaces” into their photo-tableaux. By contrast with nineteenth-century narrative, where the ruin provides the sentimental witness with “training in pure feeling,” these pictures feature a protagonist “who does not witness desolation but *is* desolation.” (11) Of depicting “an exacerbated pensiveness.” But where Dürer’s depiction of a seated Melancholy emphasizes “immobility,” Veruschka’s implies an ardently self-transporting thoughtfulness—such as she depicts in Antonioni’s *Blow-Up*.

- D32a “Fragmente einer Ästhetik der Melancholie.” Trans. (Ger.) Liselotte Mickel. In *Body Art: “Veruschka”—Trans-figurative Malerei*, by Vera Lehndorff and Holger Trülzsch, 6–12. Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 1986.
- D32b “Fragments of an Aesthetic of Melancholy.” In “*Veruschka*”: *Trans-figurations*, by Vera Lehndorff and Holger Trülzsch, 6–12. Boston: Little, Brown & Co., A New York Graphic Society Book; Little, Brown & Co. (Canada), 1986.
- D32c “Fragments of an Esthetic of Melancholy.” *Art in America* 74.9 (Sept. 1986):115–23, 159.
- D32d “Fragments of an Aesthetic of Melancholy.” *Harpers and Queen* (London), Nov. 1986, 200–1, 246, 250, 252.
- D32e “Fragmentos de una estética de la melancolía.” *El Pasaente* (Madrid) No. 5 (Winter 1987):26–40.  
A Spanish translation of D32.
- D32f “Wenn Eine in den Rahmen fällt.” *Zeit Magazin* (Hamburg) No. 12 (13 Mar. 1987):81–2, 84[–6].  
Reprints D32a, though the sections are unnumbered.
- D32g “Urywki poświęcone estetyce melancholii.” Trans. (Pol.) Sławomir Magala. *Fotografia* (Warsaw) No. 3–4 (1988): 2–4.  
Translates D32c, deleting segments 7–9.
- D32h “Fragmenty estetyki melancholii.” Trans. (Pol.) Katarzyna Malita. *Koniec wieku* (Krakow) No. 1 (1990): 64–75.

D33 Preface to *Maria Irene Fornes: Plays*, by Maria Irene Fornes, 7–10. New York: PAJ Publications, 1986.

Describes the “unique” American theatrical career of Maria Irene Fornes in terms of the “bicultural inspiration” evidenced in her indebtedness to Cuban

(folk) culture as well as to painting and cinema. Despite “the dual register, one *völkisch*, the other placeless-international” of Fornes’s plays, her “relation to the strategy of *naivete*” is complicated; where once her modernist “aversion to the reductively psychological” was evident in “a theatre of types” and “of miracles” (or “musicals”), her later plays “are less insistingly charming.” Neither “literary nor anti-literary,” her plays reveal character “through catechism,” showing “elaborate sympathy for the labor of thought.” Not even her more obviously “realistic” plays are “any less a theatre of fantasy,” despite her increasing emphasis on “the disfavored,” especially on women “doing women’s things.” Though depicting brutality, her plays avoid complicity in having “an increasingly expressive relation to dread” and attachment to history, hence to wisdom, to virtue.

D34 Foreword to *Italy: One Hundred Years of Photography*, edited by Giovanna Naldi, 12–3. Florence: Alinari, 1988.

Comprises five unnumbered segments. (1) Ponders the book’s double title, in part by noting the contrast between the earliest and latest photographs; though one is empty of people and not distinctively “Italian,” the other, an aerial photograph, is a view only conceivable *as* a photograph, and of a world where “the human, historical fact has no place.” (2) Because “a photograph is rarely a work of individual seeing but almost inevitably a (potential) unit in an archive,” the Alinari collection updates the (ahistorical) “collecting mania” on view in “the 18th century *Wunderkammer*” while participating in both the nineteenth-century novelistic project of “an encyclopedic understanding of social reality” and the twentieth-century project of advertising and mass consumerism—a project that made Italy “the world’s single most desired, most prestigious target for the instant appreciations of mass tourism” and extended “the notion of art” to include both “the whole physical environment” and “the past as such.” (3) Takes photographs as supporting “dominant ideologies and existing social arrangements” by determining “what we should look at” and “how things ought to look”—as evidenced by changes in photographic tastes and styles; where once “work” is concealed by carefully arranged poses, now it is “power.” (4) Confirms the latter claim by contrasting the book’s front and back endpaper photos. (5) In “The distinctive Italy” of the book’s earlier photographs the photographer merely observes; in “the new Italy” of the later pictures reality is itself photographic, not only commercialized but (politically) unified, Italy with itself, “with Europe, with the Atlantic world,” making it “more like... everywhere else.” Because “the past has deeper roots in Italy than anywhere else in Europe,” its photographic effacement, the denial of depth as “meaningless,” is cause for elegy and rancor.

D34a “Italy: One Hundred Years of Photography.” *Threepenny Review* No. 32 (Winter 1988):24–5.

D34b “Una prefazione.” Trans. (Ital.) Carlotta Musiari. *Fotologia 10* [Ferrara?] (1989):79–81.

D35 “In Memory of Their Feelings.” In *Dancers on a Plane: Cage-Cunningham-Johns*, by Richard Francis et al., 13–23. London: Anthony d’Offay Gallery, 1989.

Described in the Foreword as “The main text to the book,” Sontag’s poetic ruminations take their title from a painting by Johns that takes *its* title from a poem by Frank O’Hara. A theme throughout is the question of difference, of relationship or its lack, of the slide or dance or meal of language, just as the exhibit plays variations on a trio of Johns paintings, entitled “Dancers on a Plane,” which are modeled on (over) a Tantric painting of Siva coupling with Sakti, and which feature, at the margins, eating utensils and letters.

Sontag’s text has ten sections working variations on the Jasper Johns theme: 1. Dancers on a Plane, 2. Eating and Dancing, 3. The Knife, 4. The Spoon, 5. The Fork, 6. Knife, Spoon, Fork, 7. Dancers on a Plain, 8. Symmetries, 9. Silences, 10. In Memory of Our Feelings. Perhaps, given the “chopped up” progress of Sontag’s thoughts on difference and distance, it is “The Knife” that provides the text’s dominant Lévi-Strausseau trope; knife as plane, as edge, as weapon, as tool, as word.

D35a “In Memory of Their Feelings.” In *Dancers on a Plane: Cage-Cunningham-Johns*, by Richard Francis et al., 13–23. London: Thames & Hudson in association with Anthony d’Offay Gallery, 1990.

D35b “In Memory of Their Feelings.” In *Dancers on a Plane: Cage-Cunningham-Johns*, by Richard Francis et al., 13–23. New York: A.A.Knopf in association with Anthony d’Offay Gallery, 1990.

\*D35c “Im Gedenken an ihre Gefühle.” In *Freundschaften: Cage-Cunningham-Johns*. Stuttgart: Editions Cantz, 1991.

D36 “Piero Guccione: Two Texts by Susan Sontag/Piero Guccione: Due testi di Susan Sontag.” Trans. (Ital.) Peter Glendenning and Roberto Ortensi. In *Piero Guccione*, edited by Ezio Gribaudo, 15–21. Milan: Fabbri Editori, 1989.

Comprises two essays, printed back to back, each printed double-column, one in English, one in Italian. (Per Sontag, the first was written for a 1984 exhibition, titled “Sicily,” at the Chicago International Art Exposition; other sources indicate that the exhibit catalogue, titled *Piero Guccione*, was published in Rome by Galleria Il Gabbiano. We have not been able to confirm this data, so list both essays here.)

“Guccione Comes to America/Guccione arriva in America.” Contrasts the “transnational” character of modernism in general to the (falsely) “provincial” view typically taken of modern painting, a view keyed to particular cities (New

York, Paris) or particular national movements (Italian “Futurism”). Guccione, though to Italians a provincially “Southern” painter, is a case in point given his “heroic” range of subjects and his self-conscious and “unbrutal relation to the continuities of Western painting.” His landscapes, like those of Caspar David Friedrich, seek to gain a “purchase on the infinite,” but his romanticism is “always thoughtful, unaffectedly sensuous.”

“Guccione’s Place/Il posto di Guccione.” Emphasizes Guccione’s nontransgressive and nonironic relationship to his art or his audience, his reputation as a provincial painter, his neglect by an international critical and curatorial establishment bent on defining “relevance” via resolutely “progressive” and “historicist” criteria. “When all the surveys are done, the schools constructed, the clamorous transactions of influence noted, this work will continue to speak in the necessary register: of inwardness, of singularity, of the love of painting itself.”

D36a “Il posto di Guccione.” *Galleria* [Turin?] No. 1 (1990): 122–4.

D37 Foreword to *Epitaph of a Small Winner*, by Machado de Assis, xi–xx. New York: Noonday, FS&G; Toronto: Harper & Collins, 1990.

Several (auto)biographies are juxtaposed here: *Memórias Póstumas de Brás Cubas*, by Machado de Assis, understood as a limit-case of “spiritual autobiography”; de Assis’s literary reputation as inflected by time (his “modernism”) and geography (his “provincial” status as a Portuguese-language writer in Hispanophone South America); Sontag’s “retroactive” declaration that *The Benefactor* was “influenced” by de Assis.

Takes fictional autobiography as approximating the necessarily retroactive nature of lives and reputations; the “shape” is revealed only upon “completion,” as de Assis’s narrator confirms “from beyond the grave,” though the “digressiveness” of Brás Cubas is as much a matter of ironic denial (“mastering dejection”) as of literary seduction or realistic description. Explains the limitedly provincial reputation of de Assis by reference to Sterne’s ongoing reputation, on a par with Dickens and Shakespeare, in Central and Eastern Europe and Latin America, as opposed to marginalizing reassessments of Sterne in England. Yet despite the Sternean provenance of de Assis’s accomplishment, which would explain his neglect among English-language readers, he is better known in the English-language world than in South America, where Hispanophone prejudice mediates against him.

Especially interesting are Sontag’s implicit and explicit references to *The Benefactor*, but also her meditations on the gender politics of reading. Such posthumous narratives are inevitably ironic and complex: “A display of mental agility and inventiveness which is designed to amuse the reader and which purportedly reflects the liveliness of the narrator’s mind mostly measures how emotionally isolated and forlorn the narrator is.” And their narrators are

“invariably male” because “a woman with the same degree of mental acuity and emotional separateness would be regarded as simply a monster.”

- D37a* “Afterlives: The Case of Machado de Assis.” *New Yorker*, 7 May 1990, 102–8.  
Adds two paragraphs to [D37](#), asking readers to “Imagine a writer” whose domestic, contemporary reputation differs wildly from his literary (international) “afterlife.” Takes de Assis as embodying the paradox by which “the filter of time” resolves “the mysterious questions of value and permanence.”
- D37b* “Shi no nochini.” Trans. (Jap.) Takao Tomiyama. *Misuzu* (Tokyo) 32.8 (Aug. 1990):2–11.  
Translates [D37a](#).
- D37c* “Posteridades: El caso de Machado de Assis.” Trans. (Span.) Eduardo Paz Lesion. *La Nación* (Buenos Aires), 11 Nov. 1990, sec. 4a, 1–2.  
Translates [D37a](#).
- D37d* Foreword to *Epitaph of a Small Winner*, by Machado de Assis, xi–xx. London: Vintage, 1991.
- D37e* “Vite postume: Il caso di Machado de Assis.” Trans. (Ital.) Virginia Ripa de Meana. *Nuovi argomenti* (Rome), 3d ser., No. 38 (Apr.–June 1991):121–7.  
Translates [D37a](#).

## SECTION E

### Films and Recordings

\*E1 *The Original Read-In for Peace in Vietnam*. L.P. record. Compiled by Rosalind Wells and Louis Menashe. Broadside Records, 1967. BR 452.

Cited in a headnote to B27; “sections of Miss Sontag’s [B27] address” are included in this record of a read-in held at Town Hall, 20 Feb. 1966.

E2 *Duett för kannibaler* (Duet for Cannibals). Feature Film, Black and White, English Subtitles, 106 minutes. Writer/Director: Susan Sontag, Producer: Göran Lindgren, Executive Producer: Peter Hald, Photography: Lars Swanberg, Assistant Photographer: Hans Welin, Sound: Ulf Darin, Kjell Nicklasson, Assistant Director: Brita Werkmäster, Continuity: Kerstin Eriksdotter, Costumes/Properties: Katarina Lindgren, Electrician: Ulf Björck, Make-Up: Tina Johansson, Barbro Holmbring, Editor: Carl-Olav Skeppstedt, Mixing: Sven Fahlén, Music: Dovák, Mahler, Wagner. Cast: Adriana Asti (Francesca Bauer), Lars Ekborg (Arthur Bauer), Gösta Ekman (Tomas), Agneta Ekmanner (Ingrid), Britta Brunius (Mrs. Grundberg), Stig Engström (Lars), Gunnar Lindkvist (Man in Cafeteria). Produced by Sandrew Film & Teater AB, Sweden, 1969. Originally distributed by Evergreen Films in the United States and Canada and by Contemporary Film in Great Britain.

The segmentation provided for A6 is generally accurate to E2. The language spoken in *Duett för kannibaler* is largely Swedish, though based on Sontag’s English script. The latter is followed fairly closely as far as dialogue is concerned, though some of the information about camera placement, for example, is mildly inaccurate to E2. Ironically, both the Swedish and English credits assign the “English subtitles” to Sontag, though the titles often do *not* translate all the Swedish we hear, nor do they always correspond exactly to the English text. Perhaps the greatest difference between A6 and E2 is the sense of silence that characterizes the film, which a published script has a tough time embodying. A6 is also much more emphatic than E2 about the temporal relations among various sequences, in specifying time of day or the time that has passed between one segment and the next.

E3 “Spotlight on Susan Sontag: A ‘Modern’ Critic Discusses Literature and the Ascendancy of Films.” Audiocassette. 56 minutes. With Edwin Newman. Motivational Programming Corp., Tucson, AZ, 1969 [1970]. Modern Literary Voices 055/16025M. See F9.

Allows that “The Aesthetics of Silence” is “Against Interpretation Revisited,” though its emphasis is less on the interpreter than on the maker. Observes the “unhappy analogy” between “the world of art and the world of fashion” in the (modern) phenomena of publicity, of self-consciousness, the youth-cult, antiintellectualism. Links the American myth of pastlessness with the vogue for psychotherapy. Discusses her trip to Hanoi; her response to Asian culture as changing her “idea of what people are like and what the possibilities of human society are.” Observes how patriotism in America is monopolized by the right, as if radicalism were un-American. Asked about “the outburst of sexuality” in popular culture, Sontag admits preferring permissiveness to hypocrisy, while describing *Duet for Cannibals* as less erotic than anxious.

\*E3a “Spotlight on Susan Sontag.” Audiocassette, 56 minutes. With Edwin Newman. Cassette Duplication Service, 1970 [1979?]. 1526. (Held in the Saint Cloud State Univ. library.)  
Listed in WorldCat; only available on site. Probably the same interview as [E3](#).

\*E4 “Ideas and Visions.” Two Audiocassettes, 118 minutes. Round table discussion with Murray Bookchin, Ti-Grace Atkinson, Allen Ginsberg, Susan Sontag. Los Angeles: Pacifica Tape Library, 1970 [1977?]. “Life, Liberty and the Pursuit of Happiness” series. (Held in the California Polytechnic State Univ. library.)

Listed in WorldCat; only available on site.

\*E5 *Brother Carl*. Feature Film, Black and White, 97 minutes. Writer/Director: Susan Sontag, Executive Producer: Göran Lindgren, Production Manager: Peter Hald, Photography: Rune Ericson, Björn Thermaenius, Sound: Ulf Darin, Björn Öberg, Set Designer: Charles Delattre, Unit Manager: Britt Ohlsson, Assistant to the Director: Brita Werkmäster, Continuity: Marianne Johnson, Clothing and Properties: Inger Pehrsson, Make-Up: Tina Johansson, Electrician: Ulf Björck, Grips: Ted Lindahl, Ragnar Waaranperä, Editor: Lars Hagström, Music: Torbjörn Lundquist (Performed by The Saulesco String Quartet), Mixing: Berndt Frithiof, Kjell Westman. Cast: Laurent Terzieff (Carl Norén), Geneviève Page (Karen Sandler), Gunnel Lindblom (Lena Holmberg), Keve Hjelm (Martin Ericsson), Torsten Wahlund (Peter Sandler), Pernilla Åhlfeldt (Anna Sandler). Produced by Sandrew Film & Teater AB and Svenska Filminstitutet, Sweden, 1971. Released in the United States by New Yorker Films. Released in France as *Les Gêmeaux*. See [G40](#), [G55](#).

The [A10](#) segmentation is accurate to [E5](#), though [A10](#) obviously lacks the productions stills and several scenes or partial scenes included in the book version of *Brother Carl*. Moreover, [E5](#) also obviously lacks various [A10](#) authorial commentaries assigning states of mind or emotions to characters. The result is a film where character motivations and relationships are more uncertain,

more inferred from behavior, than the “film” readers are likely to imagine under the prompting of A10. Unlike *Duet*, *Brother Carl* was written and shot in English; though the film stays close (we are told) to the published script, the script cannot replicate the differently accented English of Sontag’s international cast, an expressive difference that underscores the hesitations and silences of the film’s psycho-drama fable of frustrated expressiveness.

Despite its greater explicitness, however, A10’s readerly linearity is quite distinct from the film viewer’s sense of the “dance” of characters, the exchanges of glances, positions, emotions. At first, for example, Lena seems stronger than Karen, but then she seeks to re-create her love for Martin by drawing on Karen’s presence and strength. Likewise, Carl, seemingly the most vulnerable character, is the only one capable of reaching Anna. Carl, an only child of as-if genderless parents, brother to no one but thereby to everyone, is an incurable artist manqué whose very inarticulateness leads to forms of therapeutic speech, Karen’s “saying” of her daughter’s name, Anna’s discovery of life’s “heaviness” at the very moment when language becomes, via laughter, a form of communicative sharing. Whether the film communicates the miracle of communication is problematic, to judge by reviews and reports; many who have seen it find the distanced, long-shot presentation of the final miracle too formal, too remote.

E6 “Susan Sontag.” Audiocassette, 59 minutes. [Canadian Broadcasting Corp. “Ideas” program. With: David McPherson.] Center for Cassette Studies, North Hollywood, CA. n.d. [1971?] Literature/CBC798.

Asked about avant-gardism, Sontag notes how twentieth-century music is still judged by nineteenth-century standards—as instancing the “cultural schizophrenia” of modernism, wherein lives are lived conservatively yet art is prized for its “assaults on consciousness,” as expressing Freudian “discontent,” as “provocation,” as “anti-art,” itself now our “tradition,” our “classicism.” Observes how this artist-as-“super individual” model contradicts more “integrated” pictures of the artist/audience relationship (as patronized, as spokesperson) and leads, in “liberal” societies, to a “tremendous narrowing” of the concept of art, and to a “high casualty rate” among artists, whose attempts to “outrage” are easily “assimilated” as “fashionable.” Asked if this amounts to antiintellectualism, Sontag demurs, seeing it as a (reactionary) frontierist populism, also as evincing the “specialization” of modern life, which generates and sustains contradiction—whereby intellectuals point out how myths entail moral blindness and people (and politicians) simply ignore them. Sontag describes her hopes for “democratizing” the arts, her changed view of the value of avant-gardism, by reference to the disadvantages of “professionalism,” elaborated via the art/medicine analogy, as limiting art to the educated, the credentialed, the cosmopolitan. Cites popular culture—patchwork quilts, Bob Dylan—as exemplifying “sophisticated artistic ideas” in accessible, less inhibited forms, whereby “tradition” does not enforce restriction or deny immediate experience. Sontag denies she sought to be difficult or inaccessible in her novels or films; avows she addressed the subject of “discontent, psychological and

philosophical misery...the condition in this society,” hence a common experience, yet she did so in “austere” terms, in an “invisible” manner, giving the reader an “experience,” but withholding “analysis,” as if that were the reader’s task. Expresses a desire to speak more directly, more “specifically,” “historically”—a film about “discontented women” rather than “discontent” per se—to be more “present” in her work, more openly “didactic.”

E7 *Promised Lands*. Documentary Film, Color, 87 minutes. Writer/Director: Susan Sontag, Assistant Director: David Rieff, Producer: Nicole Stéphane, Production Manager: Monique Montivier, Associate Producers: Nadine Hain [Haim?], Alex Massis, Assistant to the Producer: Bonni McCrea, Camera: Jeri Sopanen, Editors: Annie Chevally, Florence Bocquet, Sound: Gary Alper. Distributed by New Yorker Films, New York, 1974. See G55.

The layering of visual and audio tracks in E7 is very intricate; sound and image are often out of sync. The following segmentation favors shifts in narrators, or between narrated and nonnarrated sequences, as marking the film’s organization.

(1) Two black-clad old women talk, two priests also; one priest quickly ascends a tower and tolls the bells; cityscape montage of domes and crescents, crosses and television aerials; an Arab herdsman in the desert; primary credits.

(2) British residents gather at the Jerusalem War Cemetery; radio sounds, a sermon, BBC, wreath-laying; headstones circa 1917; heart-monitor beeps; battle sounds.

(3) A burned out truck convoy; corpses and Israeli esprit de corps; Arabic radio.

(4) An Israeli officer in an Arab schoolroom; reads from Arabic educational ministry documents and textbooks, lessons in hatred and anti-Semitism; bodies in the desert.

(5) Wailing Wall; prayers and chants, men vs. women, the wall and a dome, a pacing sentry.

(6) An orthodox neighborhood; men and boys in the street; women on balconies, workers on scaffolding; an Arab walks to the camera, a woman walks away.

(7) (An unidentified) Yoram Kaniuk meditates on Israel as an answer to Auschwitz, Zionism as a (rebellious) reply to God; in voice over—against images of Israeli street markets and Arab men drinking coffee, of shepherds in the hills, sounds of radios and pop music—discusses Zionism’s socialist legacy, its denial of tragedy, of Arab rights, its facade of rationality and its mystical roots; Kaniuk (on screen, then off) discusses changes since the Six Day War, the retreat of socialism, the advent of American consumerism; Arab herdsman, apartment blocks and a supermarket; the “therapeutic” shock of the Yom Kippur War; a radio is dialed.

(8) Radio sounds and commercial images; movie posters (*Lady Sings the Blues*) and shop signs (“Mt. Sinai Ice Cream”); sandbags and embassy parking spots.

(9) (An unidentified) Yuval Ne'eman recounts—mostly in voice-over, against images of Yom Kippur War tank battle-fields—the history of Arab/Israeli conflicts since 1920; soldiers don equipment, load busses and trucks, move out.

(10) Trucks, mostly military, cross a pontoon bridge, choppers overhead; Radio Cairo avows the “fighting” heritage of Egyptian civilization; Kaniuk (in voice-over) ponders the timing and extent of Egyptian war preparations; Radio Cairo asks the purpose for which Israelis fight; Kaniuk ponders the government’s failure to make peace from strength after the Six Day War, the prospect of Arab revenge; shots of desert, of fortifications, of workers and bulldozers, of a construction site; Kaniuk (in voice-over) ponders the “pogrom complex” of Israelis and remembers the “masquerade” of early statehood.

(11) Wax Museum sequence; highlights of Israeli history, chants and singing, battle sounds and church bells: Baron Rothschild’s visit, early martyrs and heroes, the 1947 Exodus, Weizmann’s oath-taking, Eichmann on trial, Golda Meir and President Kennedy, the 1967 war; a mock wall and the real wall; a street market, a movie poster, the Via Dolorosa.

(12) Ne'eman reports (on screen, then off) the Arab view of Israel, as intruder (like the crusaders), as an abscess that needs curing; Israeli soldiers (men, women) at curbside; heart-monitor sounds; Israel as a lost Arab province, like Spain; Kaniuk (in voice-over) reports paradox of Palestinian intellectuals, schooled and strengthened by their struggle; Israeli soldiers in an Arab neighborhood; Jews as disavowing tragedy, Palestinian rights, resettlement in Nebraska; solution only possible on stage, in Shakespeare, thence the tragedy of a doubly promised land.

(13) A bus crosses a bridge; Arab passengers are searched, sounds of metal detectors, a heart monitor; Ne'eman ponders the Arab version of a “final solution,” then (partly in voice-over) the history of Arab anti-Semitism, toward individual Jews, toward the Jewish state; orthodox men pray at a wall; Arab anti-Semitism (in Syria) as a cause of Jewish settlement in Palestine.

(14) Radio and battle sounds over shots of Israeli soldiers on patrol; Kaniuk (partly in voice-over) expresses a soldier’s view— of an endless, generation-destroying war; soldiers on watch, bombed-out trucks, battle sounds, heart-monitor beeps; wailing women, silent men, a military graveyard; honor guards, a bugle calls; Kaniuk speaks of the soldier who wanted no more killing.

(15) A hospital, one man bandaging another, battle sounds; Kaniuk speaks of the soldier, of silence, of horror, of memory; bandaging and battle sounds; Kaniuk advocates an end to war; bandaging; Kaniuk asks “who needs this desert?”

(16) Hospital grounds, battle sounds, a voice; a doctor explains the goal of treatment, to return the soldier to his family as “son, father, breadwinner”; war as “overstimulation” akin to cinema and television; “trance” therapy via (drug-assisted) reenactment, as allowing “full expression” of traumatic feelings; a syringe, blood, tape-recorded battle sounds, impromptu special effects.

(17) Battle sound continues; a mock battlefield, cut-out soldiers and tanks, seen through a bunker window. (18) Battle sounds and therapy-session moans continue; tanks and tank crews; tanks pull out; the image empties and freezes; credits; cut to black; moans continue until film runs out.

E7a *Promised Lands*. 55 minutes.

Abridges E7 by cutting Ne'eman's (on and offscreen) narration and the Wax Museum scene, thus all of segments 9 and 11, and most of segments 12–3. Also deleted were segments 6 and 15, and parts of segments 8, 10, and 14.

E8 “Marxism Today.” Audiocassette, 55 minutes. With: Susan Sontag, Michael Harrington, Robert Nesbitt. Center for Cassette Studies, 1975.

Sontag chairs a discussion of George Steiner's description of Marxism as a new religion. Sontag notes how the Marxism-as-religious-myth analogy prejudices by implying that Marx's theory is fiction; notes how myth is generally a right-wing phenomenon, even in the Soviet Union, and that serious developments of Marxist thought have generally taken place outside the communist orbit. Prompted to consider the relation of science and religion, Sontag notes that the analogy cuts both ways, that religious language can be (has been) used for socialist purposes, that Marx would not have distinguished between Marxism as scientific truth and Marxism as urging political action. Asked (by Nesbitt) about examples of Steiner's claim, Sontag adduces China, specifically a rural commune she visited where the peasants took regular study breaks to read Engels; allows that the regime encourages education in place of religion, but notes as well—in the context of Marx's antipathy to peasant life and his presupposing the advantages of bourgeois institutions—how readily certain aspects of Marxist theory accord with (tribal) Chinese culture.

E9 “Agnes Varda and Susan Sontag: Lions and Cannibals.” Videocassette, Color, 27 minutes. Host: Jim McAndrew, for “Camera Three,” Producer/Director: Merrill Brockway, Writer: Stephan Chodorov. With: Susan Sontag, Agnès Varda, Jack Kroll. Creative Arts Television Archive, Kent, CT, 1977.

Jack Kroll interviews Sontag and Varda on the occasion of the 1969 New York Film Festival, which featured *Duet for Cannibals* and Varda's *Lions' Love*. Urged to describe the characters in her (or Sontag's) film as “grotesque,” Varda demurs, describing the ménage à trois of *Lions' Love* as a “quiet conjugal life”—by contrast with the political chaos of America circa 1968. Similarly prompted, Sontag acknowledges the complexity of the art/life relation, before praising the “reality” and “authenticity” of Varda's characters—by contrast with the extreme role playing of the older couple in *Duet*. Kroll's last question—about the apocalyptic bent of late 1960s culture—prompts a brief discussion of the “100 Year War” in Vietnam and the conviction that bad is likely to get worse. (Originally broadcast on CBS-TV, 12 Oct. 1969?)

E10 “Illness as Metaphor: Susan Sontag Discusses Her Latest Book.” Audiocassette. 60 minutes. With Heywood Hale Broun. Center for Cassette Studies, North Hollywood, CA, n.d. [1978?] 39007.

Broun prompts Sontag by reading passages from A13. She avows that disease metaphors not only harm disease sufferers but are bad thought-tools, for simplifying complex situations. Broun contends that romanticizing madness ignores real insanity; Sontag adduces the power of fantasy and projection to overcome mere facts, which can lead to suicidal fatalism. Broun adduces Foucault’s hypotheses on madness and incarceration; Sontag notes the foolishness of confining TB sufferers to sanatoria, even after TB’s cause was discovered. Asked whether new diseases are probable, Sontag notes our general ignorance of all but infectious diseases, and imagines “reclassifications” as medical knowledge increases; in the meanwhile, the tendency to psychologize disease and culpability is likely to continue, abetted by disease-anxieties shared alike by doctors and patients. Sontag advocates American pragmatism toward illness, that patients should be no less active and inquisitive regarding illness than they would be in legal or economic matters; scores the tendency of doctors (especially male doctors) to “infantalize” their patients, even to “fire” them if they seek second opinions.

E11 *In Dark Places: Remembering the Holocaust*. Documentary Film, Color, 58 minutes. Director: Gina Blumenfeld, Editing: Sara Fishko, Cinematography: Affonso Beato, Fred Goodich, Judy Irola. With: Armand Volkas, Glenn Benest, Alan Kanter, Lisa Kanter, Peter Mann, Anna Mindess, Dev Rosenblatt, Andy Rothstein (The New Artef Players). Phoenix Films, 1978.

Comprises a series of interviews—of Holocaust survivors and their children, mostly—intertextually combined with footage from *Triumph of the Will*, with Nazi-era photographs, and with scenes of actors rehearsing, performing, and discussing *Survivors*, a play by Armand Volkas. Sontag appears in the latter half of the film, as a Jew from slightly different circumstances, whose viewpoint is employed to extend the obligation to recall the Holocaust beyond the immediate family of Jewish culture. Sontag first appears in an on-screen quotation (from “Reflections on *The Deputy*”), which is paired in voice-over with Sontag’s recounting of the epistemological shock she received, as a twelve year old, at seeing photos of the death camps. In her second appearance she discusses the “moral obligation” borne by all the parties concerned, though that concern extends finally to all human beings. In her third and last segment, Sontag adduces the complexity of history as mediating *against* the simplifications of memory, especially in a consumerist culture where the “purity of images” is beyond recovery. As regards the fascination of fascism, Sontag links it to a generalized desire for extreme sensation, for which the Holocaust provides especially potent material, though the “conflagration” trope seems to deny the long-term deliberation involved in Hitler’s undertaking to exterminate the Jews, even at the risk of losing the war.

*E11a Holocaust.* Videocassette, 84 minutes. New York: Mastervision, 1983. [Mastervision Humanities Series, Religion,] 913.

[E11](#) is one of four titles included in this compilation.

\*E12 “Susan Sontag on Photography.” Audiocassette, 59 minutes. Washington, D.C.: National Public Radio, Options II, 1978. (Held in the San Antonio College library.)

Listed in WorldCat; only available on site.

E13 *Debriefing: A Reading by Susan Sontag.* Stereo L.P., 36 minutes. Tanam Press, New York, 1979. LC# 79-740524.

Sontag reads the [A14](#) text, even “performs” the spaces between paragraphs and sections. That it *is* a recorded performance underscores the story’s repeated references to voices, to recording, to amplification, to the desire to stop listening, not to mention the added poignancy of the narrator’s direct appeals to an audience (“Don’t try to talk me out of it. Nothing, nothing could tear me away from this rock”).

E14 *La Spirale* (Spiral). Videocassette Documentary, 145 minutes. Directors: Armand Matellart, Jacqueline Meppiel, Valérie Mayoux, with Chris Marker, Silvio Tendler, Pierre Flament, Additional Footage: Étienne Becker, François Catonné, Music: J.-C. Eloy, Editing: Pierre Flament, Donna Levy. [With: Susan Sontag and Donald Sutherland]. A Les Films Molière release of a Films Molière-Reggane Films-Seuil Audiovisuel production, Paris, 1975. Released on video by Idera, Vancouver, BC. n.d. [1979.]

*La Spirale* (1975) is an almost month-by-month account of the rise and fall of Salvador Allende’s Popular Unity government in Chile. Reviews of the Paris release make no mention of Sontag or Sutherland, though the film’s voice-over narration—spoken in the original by François Périer and Med Hondo—did come under scrutiny; see *Cahiers du cinéma* No. 265 (Mar.–Apr. 1976): 56–60. The Idera video release credits Sontag and Sutherland, without specifying their participation, though Sutherland’s is clearly the “voice” over. The Sontag entry in the third edition of *Contemporary Novelists* (New York: St. Martin’s, 1982) includes, under “Screenplays,” the following: “*The Spiral* (English version), 1979.” It is likely that Sontag translated some or all of the narration for the English version of the movie. To judge by script excerpts published in *L’Avant-scène: Cinéma* No. 169 (May 1976), the English-language voice-over is very close to the French original, though one can certainly hear a Sontagian turn of phrase in passages like the following: “It would be wrong to say that the Allende government fell only because of right wing stratagems. That amounts to saying that the right was invincible. And those who out of loyalty refuse to countenance any criticism of the Popular Unity government are perhaps unaware that this is what they are implying.”

\*E15 *Town Bloody Hall.* Documentary Film, Color, 88 minutes. Directors: D.A.Pennebaker, Chris Hegedus, Producer: D.A.Pennebaker, Associate

Producer: Shirley Broughton, Camera: D.A. Pennebaker, Editor: Chris Hegedus. With: Norman Mailer, Germaine Greer, Diana Trilling, Jacqueline Ceballos, Jill Johnston [and Susan Sontag, in the audience]. Produced by Pennebaker Inc., 1980.

Reviewed by Vincent Canby in the *New York Times*, 3 Apr. 1979, C8.

E16 "Writer's Workshop: Susan Sontag." Videocassette, Color, 29 minutes. Executive Producer: Tom Stepp, Producer: William Price Fox, Director: Dave Smalley, Host: George Plimpton. Univ. of South Carolina/South Carolina ETV Network, 1982. Distributed by PBS Video, [Alexandria, VA,] 1989. WRWO111.

Sontag discusses the differences between writing fiction and nonfiction—the former being more intimate, personal, written longhand, in bed, the latter a more public, formal exercise she does on a typewriter. Discusses the writer's duty as "guardian of the language," her writer's fascination with "language itself; describes her childhood interest in writing, her early submissions and influences, how she came to publish her first novel; her breaking away from writing to direct films and plays in Europe, where the idea of the director is "less narrowly commercial." Avows her interest in directing involves the visual, the nonverbal. Briefly discusses her polemical intent in writing *Illness as Metaphor*, as opposed to her general loyalty to "literature." Avows herself a feminist, but not a "feminist writer."

E17 "On Paul Goodman." Audiocassette, 29 minutes. Interviewer and Executive Editor: David Ray. New Letters on the Air: Contemporary Writers on Radio, Univ. of Missouri, Kansas City, Oct. 1982. Sontag reads the A15 text of her Paul Goodman essay, after an introductory conversation about Goodman's (Sontag-like) status as a "professional outsider," though one who "renounced his gifts as a fiction writer to become another kind of writer." Sontag expresses restlessness with her public reputation as an essayist, expresses a desire to stop writing essays in favor of fiction. A final exchange refers to Sontag's guest-lecturer remarks about photography and the changes it has wrought in human memory and our sense of mortality.

\*E18 *Shadows from Light*. Documentary Film, 60 minutes. Director: Stephen Dwoskin, Narrator: Susan Sontag. BBC Channel 4. [1983?]

A documentary of surrealist photographer Bill Brandt; cited by Hugo Williams in "The Rich, the Nude and the Famous," *New Statesman*, 30 Mar. 1984, 30.

\*E19 *Unguided Tour*. Feature Film, Color, 72 minutes. Writer/Director (from her short story): Susan Sontag, Producer: Giovannella Zannoni, Photography: Renato Berta. Cast: Lucinda Childs (She), Claudio Cassinelli (He). Produced by Lunga Cittata Cooperative, RAI channel 3, [Italy,] 1983.

Cited in I10a; discussed in H120.

E20 *Zelig*. Feature Film, Black and White, Color, 79 minutes. Executive Producers: Charles H. Joffe, Jack Rollins, Producer: Robert Greenhut, Writer/Director: Woody Allen, Photography: Gordin Willis. Cast: Woody Allen

(Leonard Zelig), Mia Farrow (Eudora Fletcher), Mary Louise Wilson (Sister Ruth), Stephanie Farrow (Young Sister Meryl), Ellen Garrison (Older Dr. Fletcher), Jean Trowbridge (Eudora's mother), Deborah Rush (Lita Fox), Susan Sontag, Irving Howe, Saul Bellow, Bricktop, Dr. Bruno Bettelheim, John Morton Blum (Themselves). Orion Pictures, 1983.

This "documentary" study of the shape-shifting Leonard Zelig gives Sontag, in her cultural analyst persona, the first word ("He was *the* phenomenon of the twenties"). In a subsequent appearance she describes Dr. Eudora Fletcher's therapeutic success with Zelig as more an aesthetic than psychological triumph, a case of instinct rather than theory.

*E20a*                      *Zelig*. Videocassette. Warner Home Video, [Burbank, CA.] 1984. 22027.

E21 "The Dummy." Audiocassette, 29 minutes. Host: Judy Ray, Interviewer: David Ray, Producer: Judy Ray. New Letters on the Air: Contemporary Writers on Radio, Univ. of Missouri, Kansas City, Mar. 1983.

Sontag reads the [A14](#) text, accompanied at moments by music from Tchaikovsky's "Nutcracker." Afterward, David Ray asks where a teacher would begin in teaching it; Sontag mentions the theme of duplication, its relation to modernism, to photography. Asked about the story's "marriage" theme and its connection to fascism, Sontag disavows any direct links between her stories and her essays, while allowing [B50](#) is also about forms of modern consciousness.

E22 *Mauvaise Conduite* (Improper Conduct). Documentary Film, Color, 110 minutes. Written/Directed: Nestor Almendros, Orlando Jiménez Leal, Executive Producers: Margaret Menegoz, Barbert Schroeder, Michel Thoulouze, Editing: Michel Pion, Sound: Daniel Delmau, Phil Pearl, Camera: Dominique Merlin. Interviews with: Reinaldo Arenas, Guillermo Cabrera Infante, Caracol, Fidel Castro, Carlos Franqui, Martha Frayde, Juan Goytisolo, Heberto Padilla, Susan Sontag, Ana Maria Simo, René Ariza, *et al.* Produced by Les Films du Losange and Antenne-2, Paris, 1984.

Among the many talking heads in this critique of the repression of "improper" (mostly homosexual) conduct in Cuba is Sontag, whose comments (in French) regarding the political significance of homoeroticism in militarized cultures and the puritan heritage of the left that prevents it from theorizing gender are juxtaposed with shots of Castro proclaiming the altruism of the revolution and reviewing a military parade.

*E22a*                      *Improper Conduct* ("Mauvaise Conduite"). Videocassette. Cinevista Video, New York, 1984. CIV-2003.

E23 "A Primer for Pina: Susan Sontag on Pina Bausch: A Television Essay." Videocassette, 45 minutes. Produced/Directed: Jolyon Wimhurst. A City Documentaries Production for Channel 4, Channel Four TV Company,

[England,] 1984. (In the collection of the Museum of Radio and Television, New York City.)

Sontag describes the work of German choreographer Pina Bausch as representative of a distinctive German tradition of dance, theater, and opera initiated by Wagner. Also compares Bausch's style to contemporary choreographers such as Lucinda Childs and Merce Cunningham. In contrast to other female choreographers who have taken a unisex approach to dance, so that men and women can dance the same movements, Bausch emphasizes the different roles the sexes play, and incorporates elements not only of her autobiography but of the lives of her actor/dancers.

E24 "Voices: Writers and Politics," Parts One and Two (Nadine Gordimer and Susan Sontag). Videocassette, Color, 53 minutes. TV Channel 4 (England). 1985. (In the collection of the Museum of Radio and Television, New York City; recently damaged.) See [F85a](#).

Sontag and Gordimer take turns questioning each other on the topic of the writer's (social) responsibility. Though both began writing at tender ages, differing social circumstances (South Africa vs. southern California) yielded differing attitudes toward the ambivalence of the writer's position—which Sontag describes as "making something social" by the very act of standing for "singularity" of voice or perspective. Both agree that being political is a "human" (more than a writerly) obligation. The modernist difficulty of melding inner and outer landscapes, language and "subject," is pondered. (Sontag writes, as she once told William Gass, out of "Grief") Where Sontag describes writing as both radical and conservative, Gordimer cites Gramsci on living in "the state of interregnum." Where Sontag expresses "a defensive feeling toward change," Gordimer avers the hope that it's still possible "to create a new Left" because she sees nothing worth preserving in South Africa.

\*E25 Lecture given at Florida International University, 18 Jan. 1985. Videorecording, Color, 55 minutes. Critic's lecture series. 5/Florida International University, Visual Arts Gallery.

Listed in WorldCat; only available on site.

E26 "AIDS: Plague, Panic, and the Test of Human Values: A Conference Presented by the Maine Humanities Council." Videocassette, Color, 30 minutes. Produced by Polly Wilkinson. With Susan Sontag, David Herlihy, Tom F.Driver, Cameron Duncan, John Arras, Allan Brandt. Maine Humanities Council, Portland, 1988.

Sontag (in voice-over) reads the first paragraph of [A13](#) as quasi-prologue to this much abridged record of an 8 May 1987 conference. Her on-camera appearances are sound bites—regarding how "innocent" presupposes "guilt," the moral objection to the "moralization of disease," the "anguishing" conflict between doctor-patient confidentiality and the rights of potential sexual partners—that punctuate more sustained remarks by other conference participants.

\*E27 *Sarah*. Documentary Film, 31 minutes. Producer: Nicole Stéphane, Writer/Director: Edgardo Cozarinsky, Editor: Suzanne Baron, Photography:

Stéphane Adam, Music: Jules Massenet, Emmanuel Chabrier, Giuseppe Verdi, Giacomo Puccini, With: the voice of Susan Sontag. 1988.

Reviewed by Caryn James in the *New York Times*, 25 Sept. 1988, 64.

E28 “Satanic Verses.” Audiotape, 15 minutes. Reported by David Culhane. With: George Bush, Norman Mailer, Susan Sontag, Leon Wieseltier, Evanne Haddad, Gay Talese, Charles Kuralt. Derives from the 26 Feb. 1989 CBS broadcast of “Sunday Morning.” (Held in the Michigan State Univ. library.)

Reports the campaign against Salman Rushdie and his novel and the Sontag-organized response of American writers. Sontag decries the death sentence as “international terrorism against the life of the mind” and urges (“in the words of many American patriots”) commitment to freedom of the press.

(A second audiotape held at Michigan State, entitled “American Authors Rally in Support of Salman Rushdie’s Novel *Satanic Verses*,” is an ABC report of the same event, though Sontag utters only a few words in the two-minute segment reported by John McKenzie.)

E29 “On AIDS and Its Metaphors.” Audiocassette, 70 minutes. School of the Art Institute of Chicago, Visiting Artists Program, 11 Apr. 1989. No. 1437No. 63.

Distinguishes her “contemplative” task as a “writer” or intellectual from the “activist” role she plays as “citizen,” as “feminist”; adduces the complex relationships among “different kinds of texts.” Reads C12 segments 12–5 and a passage from A20b section 8 (regarding the “global” circulation of goods, people, fear); notes the C12 claim that writing depicts death differently than painting or photography, the extent as well to which her subjects are rarely singular or exclusively topical, the way C12 derives its conviction from facts about the “illness situation” rather than about AIDS per se—hence disputes the view that C12 is (as if generically) more emotional, less argumentative, than A20b. Takes both works as coming “equally from feeling”; both are equally “bearers of ideas”—as against the Romantic ideology that insists on the opposition of head and heart and has the effect of “alienating us from our experience.”

Discusses the process of writing A13 (reads excerpts from A20b section 1 describing her initial anger at the way fantasies about illness “added to the suffering,” her desire to “deprive” cancer of meaning). Notes her initial willingness to let others apply A13 to AIDS, then describes the process by which she concludes that AIDS exceeded her A13 “prototype”—by changing public and professional attitudes about the “triumphal” march of medical technology, by changing her understanding of certain words (“plague,” “victim”), especially their polarizing assumptions (talk of “innocent” victims entails “guilty” ones). Urges that using apocalyptic metaphors to agitate for increased research support risks fatalism and disappointment, not to mention public fatigue or disinterest; that AIDS is better taken symptomatically, as “a window on a very fearful view of the future,” in that it reveals the extent of human fearfulness and

vindictiveness. In these respects, “contemplative and reflective capacities” are just as morally “imperative” as activism.

E30 “Susan Sontag Talks about the Use of the Word ‘Cancer’ as a Metaphor for ‘Evil.’” Audiocassete, 90 minutes. Michigan State University. Celebrity Lecture Series, 24 Apr. 1989.

Ponders—via extended readings from and paraphrases of [A20b](#)—what we mean by “metaphor” and how metaphor pertains to illness. Grants that metaphor is no more avoidable than interpretation, but urges that the “fictional element” necessary to metaphor’s “as if logic requires scrutiny. Notes aspects of the body/polity analogy; each is a relation among parts, the parts are related organically, and are organized hierarchically. Attributes the persistence of the left/right political trope, despite its contingent origins in the French National Assembly, to our need to envision society “as a body in space.” Notes body-as-commonwealth and body-as-building metaphors in medicine, especially the body-as-fortress figure, which then generates various attack/defense scenarios. Discusses the genesis of [A20b](#) in [A13](#) (reading here from [A20b](#) section 1), then asks how her case about metaphor applies to AIDS. Allows it does *not*, in that the connection of AIDS and death is far less mythic than that between death and cancer, in that AIDS undoes the medical myth that the list of diseases is finite. Then avows that the link of disease metaphors and punitive measures, especially when lack of available treatment attaches “mystery” to illness, “exorcises” her imagination, and gave rise to [A20b](#). Notes the link between “mystery” and the irrational fear of contagion; predicts that, even after a cure is found, AIDS will have had a lasting effect on sexual attitudes, in part because of the contradictoriness of late-stage capitalist culture. Urges that AIDS is a disease, not a discourse, yet that “the future depends on discourse,” such that we should be skeptical and as “unmetaphoric” as possible in discussing AIDS.

A question/answer session follows. Asked about censorship and the campaigns against Rushdie’s *Satanic Verses* and Scorsese’s *The Last Temptation of Christ*, Sontag observes that protesters in both cases have only “notional” or secondhand understandings of the works in question; describes the Rushdie affair especially as indicating the vulnerability of writers, to “self-censorship” above all. Asked about metaphor and abortion, Sontag avows a simple, non-metaphoric understanding of *Roe v. Wade*; that absent abortion, women will die. Notes how abortion “stands for other things,” like “family values,” that are not really advanced by taking abortion as symptomatic. Asked about television, Sontag avows her telephobia (television is “our most addicting and dangerous drug”) and ponders our lack of national will when it comes to an ecology of information and imagery.

E31 Keynote Address (“Susan Sontag: On Photography”). Audiocassete, 74 minutes. Detroit Institute of Arts. Delivered to the “Memory of Light” symposium, 13 Oct. 1989.

Describes the genesis of [A12](#) in the 1972 Diane Arbus exhibition at the Museum of Modern Art. Takes the book’s as-if uncontrollable growth as linking

it in method and subject to the “modern world” or “modern consciousness,” seen in retrospect as “at the core” of her writing career. Rejects criticism of her (photographic) amateurishness; rejects the role of “photography critic”—versus her outsider’s “speculations of a general sort”—in view of the relative absence (excepting Walter Benjamin and John Berger) of such writing circa 1972. Adduces Benjamin’s unrealized quotation project as inspiring A12’s last chapter, from which she reads at some length, as confirming the claim that A12’s paradoxical view of photography is, in some sense, photography’s view of itself. Concludes by noting some gaps or flaws in the book—Arbus getting more attention than any other photographer, film not getting enough—before sketching an as-yet unwritten essay about the privilege accorded by Romantic poets and philosophers to “sight” as a means of understanding, which “stands Plato on his head.” Where Romanticism is usually seen as “a discovery of feelings,” it was “also a discovery of facts, of literalness”; the Romantic task was to “yoke” fact and feeling together via a symbolist theory of meaning, by which visual fact is taken as symbolic of some (deeper) spiritual fact, à la Carlyle and Emerson. Notes the dispute about these matters, evident in critiques of photography in Hawthorne and Melville; sees modernism as the moment when the romantic unity of the mental and visual comes apart, symbol becoming allegory, hence abstraction, such that “facts take over” and the “symbolic credibility of images” is emptied out. Literality thus leads to the endless series, to fragmentation, to miniaturization, to deconstruction. Notes the symbolist inheritance of American culture as explaining why modernism (hence photography) seems “almost natural” to Americans.

\*E32 “Illness as Metaphor.” Videocassette, Color, 120 minutes. Distinguished lecturer series, Nazareth College, Rochester, NY, 17 Apr. 1990.

Listed in WorldCat; only available on site.

\*E33 “The Writer’s Freedom.” Audiocassette, 55 minutes. Lawrence University, Appleton, WI, 27 Apr. 1990.

Listed in WorldCat; currently missing.

E34 “Common Historical Roots.” Videocassette, Color, 128 minutes. Executive Producer: Edith Kurzweil, Producer: Dirk B. Van Zaanen, Director: J.C. Svec, Host: Daliza Crane, Moderator: Susan Sontag, With: George Konrad, Blaga Dimitrova, Tatyana Tolstaya, Norman Manea. Session 2 of an eight-session video record of the *Partisan Review*/Rutgers University conference on “Intellectuals and Social Change in Central and Eastern Europe” convened in April of 1992. Television and Radio Media Center, Rutgers, the State Univ. at Newark, 1992. See G116.

Four papers or talks are delivered: Konrad’s “A Metaphor for Self-Disciplinary Nationalism,” Dimitrova’s “Moving Away from Communism,” Tolstaya’s “The Russian Legacy,” and Manea’s “On Foreignness.” What is most “common” to these discussions is the complexity and instability of the histories involved—of languages, cultures, nations, individuals. Sontag’s chief contribution as moderator is to advance (later to defend) the view that

transnational capitalism will render nations obsolete or retrogressive, though she also comments on the political roles available to intellectuals.

E35 “The Impact of the American and French Revolutions.” Two Videocassettes, Color, 142 minutes. Executive Producer: Edith Kurzweil, Producer: Dirk B. Van Zaanen, Director: J.C. Svec, Host: Daliza Crane, Moderator: Susan Sontag, With: Vassily Aksyonov, Vladimir Tismaneanu, Adam Michnik. Session 4 of an eight-session video record of the *Partisan Review*/Rutgers University conference on “Intellectuals and Social Change in Central and Eastern Europe” convened in April of 1992. Television and Radio Media Center, Rutgers, the State Univ. at Newark, 1992. See [G117](#).

Three papers or talks are presented: Aksyonov’s “The Impact on Russian Writers,” Tismaneanu’s “Moral Dilemmas of the European Intelligentsia,” and Michnik’s “The Influence on Polish Intellectuals.” The French Revolution is taken as the Utopian and terroristic precursor of the Bolshevik Revolution. Sontag adduces Hannah Arendt’s claim that the American Revolution was equally as “radical” (and flawed) as the French; notes also that the literary treatment of the French Revolution has been overwhelmingly (not always wisely) negative, though neither revolution enfranchised blacks or women. Per Sontag, the rise of ethnocentrism requires intellectuals to remain “in critical opposition,” especially in an increasingly multicultural world where universalist values will be under increasing stress.

E36 “Susan Sontag Reads from Her Story, *The Way We Live Now*, and Talks about AIDS and the Usefulness of Fiction.” Audiocassette, 30 minutes. With: Tom Vitale. Producer: A Moveable Feast, n.d. [1992?] No. 9202.

In the interview comprising the middle portion of this radio broadcast, Sontag comments upon the way *The Way We Live Now* ([A27](#), [C12](#)), though difficult to read aloud, yet “lends itself to reading” for being a “relay race” of voices. That Sontag lends her own voice and that of host Tom Vitale to the mix—between reading the first five segments of the story, then the last segment—confirms the sense, made explicit in the interview itself, that the story has an emphatically personal element, deriving chiefly from her fabulously intense experiences as a cancer patient.

Prompted to discuss the story’s unusual structure, Sontag describes it as, in some sense, a one-time-only “stunt,” but also “one of the best things I’ve ever written” for capturing both the “velocity” and the “static quality” of living with a life-threatening illness. Asked what the story tells us about how we cope with illness, Sontag distinguishes between writing fiction and writing essays, describing fiction as the “education (or sometimes a mis-education) of feeling, of the heart,” which attests to the “complexity” of human life (as opposed to encouraging “superficial” moral judgments).

E37 *Sarajevo Ground Zero: Films of Crimes and Resistance*. Videocassette Documentary, Color, 53 minutes. Directors: Ademir Kenovic (of SAGA), Danny Schechter. Produced by SAGA and International Center for Global Communications Foundation. [1993?]

Comprises short films (“Confessions of a Monster”), documentary footage, and film interviews about the siege of Sarajevo. Sontag is interviewed both early, to the effect that the destruction of Sarajevo amounts to murder, the civil war to genocide, and late, where she reports the weariness of her *Waiting for Godot* cast as confirming Bosnian vulnerability and the necessity of outside help. Shots of Sontag directing the play are included, and also the conclusion of a performance.

E38 *The Volcano Lover: A Romance*. Two Audiocassettes, 180 minutes. Written and Performed by Susan Sontag. Producer: Deborah Raffin, Exec. Producers: Michael Viner and Deborah Raffin. Dove Audio, Beverly Hills, CA, 1993.

Sontag reads four passages from A28, “Prologue,” “Part One, 6,” Part Two, 5,” and “Part Three, 6 April 1803.” The effect, we might say, is operatic, in that Sontag “performs” each character. Though she sticks closely to her original text, with its free-indirect narrational stance, her pacing and phrasing mime the emotional temper or sensibility that the written narration attributes to her characters. This is especially (movingly) the case in the last excerpt, in which the dying Cavaliere passes by breath-like gradations from confused first-person consciousness to his last exhalation, telling his story one last time to himself while pondering the (diminished) story that history might attach to his name. (Sontag, in telling his story, of course, grants his last wish—“to be remembered for the volcano”). The “Part Three” passage begins with an explanatory transition not in the novel identifying the excerpt as an “interior monologue.”

E39 *Susan Sontag*. Videocassette Documentary, Color, 43 minutes. Writer/Director: Matteo Bellinelli, Narrator: Mary Martello. Produced by RTSI Lugano, Switzerland. [Distributed by] Films for the Humanities & Sciences, Princeton, NJ, 1994. FFH 3382.

(According to Sontag, this interview with Matteo Bellinelli of Radiotelevision della Svizzera Italiana was either recorded or broadcast 2 Mar. 1988.)

Three “voices” weave through E39:(1) a female voice describing Sontag as “America’s foremost critic of modern culture,” though this voice is usually accompanied by an illustrative visual track (California highways, New York City skylines) and occasionally reads passages from Sontag’s essays, especially “What’s Happening in America” and “The Aesthetics of Silence”; (2) a male voice, from off camera, who asks questions or reads passages from Sontag to Sontag; and (3) Sontag’s voice, typically matched to talking-head visual footage taken in Sontag’s Manhattan apartment. Primary topics include Sontag’s ambivalent relation to America and American culture; the difference between the revelations of writing and the concealments of journalistic interviews; the relation between essay writing and fiction; the relation of modern and postmodern writing; the role of religion in American life and rhetoric; the importance of “historical amnesia” (and television) in American culture; the relations of illness and language; the analogy of gender and race; the Americanness of the fantasy of self-creation.

## SECTION F

### Interviews

F1 “Susan Sontag: Intellectuals’ Darling.” Beatrice Berg. *Washington Post*, 8 Jan. 1967, sec. F, 3.

Profiles Sontag’s rise to prominence, her commitment to literature, her hope to eschew essay-writing. (Though told mostly in third person, Sontag is openly the storyteller here.)

F2 “Woman in the News: Susan Sontag: Not Even a Critic Can Choose Her Audience.” Nora Ephron. *New York Post*, 23 Sept. 1967, 29.

Sontag ponders her unsought status as a media “superstar” versus her quiet life as mother and serious writer.

F3 “Notes on Susan Sontag.” Mike McGrady. *Newsday*, 2 Dec. 1967, 3W, 36W.

Poses questions about a “Sontag cult,” about the contrast between her “tough” essays and her “femininity,” about the value of novelty, about boredom and detachment and the novel.

F4 “Whatever You’d Like Susan Sontag to Think, She Doesn’t.” James Toback. *Esquire*, July 1968, 58–61, 114–6.

Observes the conflict between Sontag’s reputation for hedonism and her writerly ambition for a Garboesque solitude. Asked about morality, she discusses her political despair, describes napalm as “a metaphor for the lethal infection we are inflicting upon the rest of humanity.” Likens herself to Beckett, Kafka; attacks Timothy Leary and the drug culture.

F5 “Susan Sontag klar med filmen vill göra en till i Sverige.” Kerstin Bodell. *Dagens Nyheter* (Stockholm), 25 Apr. 1969.

Sontag comments on the Swedishness of E2 and the isolation of filmmaking (“like being in a U-Boat”).

F6 “Susan Sontag Talks about Filmmaking.” Mel Gussow. *New York Times*, 3 Oct. 1969, 36.

F7 “Movie Journal.” Jonas Mekas. *Village Voice*, 30 Oct. 1969, 61, 63, 66.

What Mekas takes as a lack of necessity in *Duet for Cannibals* Sontag describes as detachment, of herself from Sweden, of the “abstract” story from social reality. Discusses the formal influence of Straub (Resnais, Bresson); describes E2 as “a machine to produce certain experiences.”

F8 “Camping Out with Susan.” Richard Roud. *Guardian* (Manchester), 3 Dec. 1969, 8.

Contrasts British and American forms of anti-intellectualism; avows that the comic elements of *Duet for Cannibals* were intentional.

F9 “Speaking Freely.” Edwin Newman. New York: WNBC Television. Typescript transcription of an interview taped 15 Nov. 1969, aired 13 Dec. 1969. 26 pp.

Annotated at E3 as “Spotlight on Susan Sontag.”

F9a “Speaking Freely.” In *Conversations with Susan Sontag*, edited by Leland Poague, 3–22. Jackson: Univ. Press of Mississippi, 1995.

Reprints F9, somewhat abridged.

F10 “Susan Sontag här för ny film: ‘Jag är förförd av mediet.’” Betty Skawonius. *Dagens Nyheter* (Stockholm), 7 Aug. 1970, 10.

Sontag comments on the negative Swedish reception of E2, on her devotion to filmmaking, on her plans for E5.

F11 “What Makes Susan Sontag Make Movies?” Leticia Kent. *New York Times*, 11 Oct. 1970, sec. 2, 13.

Comments on working abroad, on Hollywood (praising Kubrick, Penn; expressing the desire to work “in wide screen and color,” “to make a science fiction film” or a western), on the difference between writing and persuading, on Godard, on the history of women film directors.

F11a “What Makes Susan Sontag Make Movies?” *The New York Times Biographical Edition* 1 (1970):2559–60.

F12 “Susan Sontag: Si j’analyse mes propres films? Mais non! Ni avant, ni pendant, ni après. Je ne suis pas un critique.../Susan Sontag: If I analyse my own films? No, not at all, neither before, during, nor after. I don’t consider myself a critic!” Stig Björkman. *Cinéma en Suède/Film in Sweden* (Stockholm) No. 2 (1971):18–24.

Explores the “Swedishness” of E2 and E5. Discusses the “essayistic” political films she would like to make; the genesis of fiction in voice, of films in images.

F12a “Samtal med Susan Sontag.” *Chaplin* (Stockholm) No. 106 (1971):81–3.

A Swedish translation of F12, slightly abridged.

F13 “Susan Sontag Speaks Up on The Young, The Movies, The Insult of Being Called ‘Lady.’” Leticia Kent. *Vogue*, 1 Aug. 1971, 88, 132.

F14 “Un desay uno con Susan Sontag.” Louis Javier Garrido. *El libro y la vida* (Mexico) No. 57 (15 Feb. 1972):3–4.

Discusses modernity—as a problem attendant upon rapid change and the contrast (as in Mexico City) of modern and pre-modern cultures; the complexity of her own position as a (contradictorily) leftist intellectual.

F15 “Susan Sontag on Film.” Victoria Schultz. *Changes* (New York), 1 May 1972, 3–5.

F15a “Susan Sontag on Film.” In *Conversations with Susan Sontag*, edited by Leland Poague, 23–34. Jackson: Univ. Press of Mississippi, 1995.

F16 “Entrevue avec Susan Sontag.” Gérard Cordesse, Yves Le Pellec, Annie Le Rebeller, Maurice Lévy. *Caliban* (Toulouse), 10 (1973):93–111.

Prompted to consider her status as a writer, Sontag emphasizes the “schizophrenic” extent to which her American upbringing encouraged both the tendency to “separate personal identity from one’s vocation” and the self-determining “choice” of vocation. Describes her family as “absent,” university life circa 1950 as “Paradise,” her “uprooted” relationship to American culture. Describes her politics as deriving less from people than books, at least until her visit to Cuba in 1960. Questions on culture, on France, on interpretation solicit comments about the contingency and complexity of intellectual contexts. A series of questions focuses on the genesis and formal features of *The Benefactor* and *Death Kit*.

F17 “Susan Sontag.” In *The New Fiction: Interviews with Innovative American Writers*, by Joe David Bellamy, 113–29. Urbana: Univ. of Illinois Press, 1974.

F17a “Susan Sontag.” Trans. (Span.) Ana Sylvia Villegas. In *La nueva novelística: Entrevistas con los nuevos escritores norteamericanos*, by Joe David Bellamy, 103–15. Mexico, D.F.: Editores Asociados, 1978.

Drops some twelve paragraphs from the original, mostly having to do with “Against Interpretation” and *Death Kit*.

F17b “Susan Sontag.” In *Conversations with Susan Sontag*, edited by Leland Poague, 35–48. Jackson: Univ. Press of Mississippi, 1995.

F18 “Susan Sontag: After the First Decade.” Chuck Ortleb. *Out* (New York) 1.2 (Apr. 1974):12–4, 32–4, 58.

Describes the “disruption” of her writing and her turn to more autobiographical forms after her first decade. Discusses her debts to Oscar Wilde, the evolution of her work toward greater complexity via various “masks,” via filmmaking, via photography. Says B11 was written to extend the reach of camp beyond sexual

minorities. Discusses her sense of “miracle” as betokening the “extraordinary,” “what most of great literature is about.” Urges (per [B41b](#)) the value of feminist separatism, the misogyny of men generally; notes the “political” implications of sexuality, the view that capitalism overvalues sex (vs. the less sexually “hectic” Chinese form of androgyny).

F19 “Susan Sontag—She’s Not Choosing Sides.” Howard Kissel. *Women’s Wear Daily*, 16 July 1974, 24.

Discusses the genesis and reception of *Promised Lands*.

F20 “Susan Sontag: A Diner’s Club Card and the Need to Communicate.” Larry Gross. *Millimeter* 2.9 (Nov. 1974):16–8.

Compares *Promised Lands* to “Trip to Hanoi”; Sontag’s pre-conceptions to the Arab-Israeli realities encountered.

F21 “An Interview with Susan Sontag.” Geoffrey Movius. *New Boston Review* 1.1 (June 1975):12–3.

*F21a* “An Interview with Susan Sontag.” In *Conversations with Susan Sontag*, edited by Leland Poague, 49–56. Jackson: Univ. Press of Mississippi, 1995.

F22 “Susan Sontag.” Sue Johnston. *Cinema Papers* (Melbourne), July–Aug. 1975, 112, 177.

Describes the “closed” game-playing situation in [E2](#) as reflecting its low-budget (and Swedish) production circumstances. Avows she does not “recycle” material from one medium to another à la Duras. Acknowledges a penchant for ironic contrasts (of scenes, of characters) in all of her films.

F23 “Women, the Arts, & the Politics of Culture: An Interview with Susan Sontag.” Maxine Bernstein and Robert Boyers. *Salmagundi* No. 31–32 (Fall 1975/Winter 1976):29–48.

[F23](#) is described in a footnote as “an edited transcript of a public interview.” The text annotated at [A18](#) as “The *Salmagundi* Interview” is described as “slightly abridged.” The first question in [F23](#), about the reception of her Riefenstahl essay, is deleted from [A18](#). Many of the other questions (and answers) are foreshortened or rephrased.

*F23a* “Notes on Art, Sex and Politics.” *New York Times*, 8 Feb. 1976, sec. 2, 1, 36.

Abridges and reconfigures [F23](#).

*F23b* “Entrevista con Susan Sontag.” *Revista de occidente* (Madrid), 3d ser., No. 9 (July 1976):36–45.

This Spanish translation is closer to the [A18](#) version than to the [F23](#) original, though the Riefenstahl question and answer deleted from [A18](#) are included here.

F23c “Women, the Arts, & the Politics of Culture: An Interview with Susan Sontag.” In *Conversations with Susan Sontag*, edited by Leland Poague, 57–78. Jackson: Univ. Press of Mississippi, 1995.

F24 “Gespräch mit Susan Sontag über ihren Film ‘Promised Lands.’” Helke Sander, Gesine Stempel. *Frauen und Film* (Berlin) No. 10 (Dec. 1976):4–9.

Attributes the antagonistic European reception of E7 to the film’s political evenhandedness. The ambivalent ethics of filming the cemetery scene are discussed; also Sontag’s preference of distance (vs. close-ups) and the possibility that E7 was perceived as too masculine for a woman director.

F25 “Interview: Susan Sontag: On Art and Consciousness.” *Performing Arts Journal* 2.2 (Fall 1977):25–32.

F25a “Interview: Susan Sontag: On Art and Consciousness.” In *Conversations with Susan Sontag*, edited by Leland Poague, 79–87. Jackson: Univ. Press of Mississippi, 1995.

F26 “Susan Sontag on Writing, Art, Feminism, Life and Death.” Wendy Perron. *Soho Weekly News*, 1 Dec. 1977, 23–4, 45.

Discusses the difficulty of essay writing, being “in arrears” to earlier interests yet fascinated by “now”; the pragmatics of feminism; wanting an always adversarial relation to culture and to collapse the art/life distinction.

F27 “Sontag Talking.” Charles Simmons. *New York Times Book Review*, 18 Dec. 1977, 7, 31, 33.

Attributes interest in photography to “a reaction against difficulty in art”; avers that the subject of A12 is less photography per se than modernity. Asked about Arbus and Avedon, Sontag comments on the license accorded to photographers, to intrude, to reveal.

F27a “Pillantás a fotográfiára.” *Fotóművészet* (Budapest) 22.2 (1979):38–40.

A Hungarian translation of F27.

F28 “An Interview with Susan Sontag.” Jim Alinder. *Untitled* (Carmel) No. 14 (1978):28–37.

Compares language and photography, as addictions, as art media. Photography criticism is compared, unfavorably, to art and music criticism. Discussion of the political dimension of A12 leads to remarks on Walter Benjamin. Photography’s belated participation in a “modernist crisis” is discussed, as is the prospect of responding to individual photographs and photographers rather than the medium tout court.

F29 “Susan Sontag: La dissidence vue des USA (entretien avec Guy Scarpetta).” *Tel quel* No. 76 (Summer 1978):71–7.

- F29a* “Susan Sontag: Dissidence as Seen from the USA.” Trans. (Eng.) Clyde Thogmartin. In *Conversations with Susan Sontag*, edited by Leland Poague, 97–105. Jackson: Univ. Press of Mississippi, 1995.
- F30 “Susan Sontag: A Monk in a Spacious Cell.” Diana Loercher. *Christian Science Monitor*, 11 Jan. 1978, 18.  
 Recounts the genesis and gist of *On Photography*.
- F31 “Susan Sontag Found Crisis of Cancer Added a Fierce Intensity to Life.” *New York Times*, 30 Jan. 1978, [A16](#).
- F31a* “Susan Sontag Found Crisis of Cancer Added a Fierce Intensity to Life.” *The New York Times Biographical Service* 9 (1978):125–6.
- F31b* “‘Looking into the Black Hole’ of Death.” *San Francisco Chronicle*, 8 Feb. 1978, 13.
- F32 “On Photography.” Gigliola Nocera. *Scena* (Milan), Feb. 1978, 48–50.  
 Reviews [A12](#) along Italo-Marxist lines, seeing photography and America alike as symptoms of the epistemological blur of late-stage capitalism; concludes with a brief interview with Sontag reprising the major themes of [A12](#).
- F33 “Sagt eine Photographie der Krupp-Werke etwas über die Krupp-Werke?” Fritz J.Raddatz. *Die Zeit* (Hamburg), 3 Feb. 1978, 37–8.
- F33a* “Sagt eine Photographie der Krupp-Werke etwas über die Krupp-Werke?” In *ZEIT-Gespräche: Zehn Dialoge mit Günter Grass, Rolf Hochhuth, Thomas Brasch, Joseph Breitbach, Alfred Grosser, Alberto Moravia, Leszek Kolakowski, Susan Sontag, James Baldwin, Hans Mayer*, by Fritz J.Raddatz, 99–111. Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp Verlag, 1978.
- F33b* “Does a Photograph of the Krupp Works Say Anything about the Krupp Works?” Trans. (Eng.) Margaret S.Johnson. In *Conversations with Susan Sontag*, edited by Leland Poague, 88–96. Jackson: Univ. Press of Mississippi, 1995.
- F34 “Susan Sontag Faces the ‘Big Question Mark’: Musings on Photography, Books and Mortality.” Tom Zito. *Washington Post*, 28 Feb. 1978, [B1](#), [B3](#).
- F35 “Susan Sontag: The Dark Lady of Pop Philosophy.” Victor Bockris. *High Times*, Mar. 1978, 20–1, 23, 25, 36–7.  
 Asked why she agreed to be interviewed, Sontag refers to a “crisis” arising from publicity and her desire “to say something else.” Prompted to consider the “new” 1960s consciousness, Sontag compares marijuana to alcohol; denies the

simple equation of drug use and consumerism. Admits to writing on speed; speculates on the link between the solitariness of writing and the reliance of writers on stimulants. Describes her motive for writing as chiefly “admiration of other writers.” Asked whether she lives “in a state of fear,” Sontag replies that things, bad enough, “can” get worse—and avers that A12 is really about the destructiveness of consumer culture.

F35a “From a *High Times* Interview.” In *Shaman Woman, Mainline Lady: Women’s Writing on the Drug Experience*, edited by Cynthia Palmer and Michael Horowitz, 283. New York: William Morrow & Co., 1982.  
Excerpts F35, on the topic of writers and drugs.

F36 Bio (“Author Susan Sontag Rallies from Dread Illness to Enjoy Her First Commercial Triumph”). Barbara Rowes. *People*, 20 Mar. 1978, 74–6, 79–80.

F37 “Life and Death: A Conversation with Susan Sontag.” Caroline Drews. *San Francisco Sunday Examiner and Chronicle*, 26 Mar. 1978, “Scene” sec., 2.

F38 “Sontag+Hell.” Victor Bockris, Richard Hell. *Interview*, Apr. 1978, 28–30.

Prompted to discuss sexual difference, Sontag praises depolarization and recounts her adolescence-after-marriage experience. Insists that even obscure writers (Burroughs, Beckett) and movements (surrealism) can have mass-cultural consequences. Discussing her essays, Sontag describes opinions as “crust” one wants to “peel” off.

F39 “A Close-up Picture of Susan Sontag: Images Come Easily; She Speaks in Photographs.” Thelma O’Brien. *Los Angeles Times*, 23 Apr. 1978, sec. 5, 1, 19–20.

Sontag describes the long-ago living room of a high school teacher, her stepfather, her visit with Thomas Mann, a divorce-court meeting with Philip Rieff, her cancer treatment.

F40 “Sontag Resents Interviewer Yet Responds.” Leslie Hanscon. (*New Orleans Times-Picayune*, 3 Aug. 1978, sec. 3, 3.

F41 “Freedom of the Camera: Michael McNay Meets Susan Sontag.” *Guardian Weekly* (Manchester), 13 Aug. 1978, 23.

Sontag remarks on the significance of subject matter, on the glamour of photography as a profession.

F42 “‘Illness as Metaphor’: Personal Battle Inspires Sontag Work.” Gwynne Morgan. *Houston Post*, 15 Oct. 1978, 13CC.

F43 “Alone Against Illness.” Carol Kahn. *Family Health*, Nov. 1978, 50–3.

Discusses the genesis of A13, the “aloneness” enforced by disease taboos, her activism regarding her own cancer.

F44 “Galleria dell’immagine: Incontro con Susan Sontag.” Renata Einaudi and Alexander Stille. *Fotografia italiana* (Milan) No. 244 (Dec. 1978):12–3.

Ponders photography's relation to alienation, to art criticism, to language. Where "fashion" once invoked an ethos, now it is only a matter of appearances. Then again, photographs allow us to maintain "a very real sensation of the past that nobody had before photography came about."

F45 "Møte med amerikans litterære høyesterettsjustitiarius." Sigmund Hoftun. *Gyldendals aktuelle magasin* (Oslo) No. 2 (1979):4–12.

Prompted to discuss the state of contemporary letters, Sontag praises J.G. Ballard's "speculative fiction" while declaring dislike for John Irving; says she can live with the commercialization of publishing as long as good writers get published, like Calvino, Barthelme, etc. Asked about European writers, she discusses Yourcenar, Solzhenitsyn, Naipaul; about American politics, she praises progress in racial and gender relations, while noting the conservatism of American students and the weakness of social-democratic forces. Asked about the "new philosophers," Sontag describes them as second-rate radicals by contrast with Weil, Arendt, and Gide. Describes her reluctant Americanism as very American. See C5c.

F46 "Une Américaine à l'écoute de l'Europe." J.-L. Pinard-Legry. *La quinzaine littéraire* (Paris) [No.] 306 (1979):4–5.

Sontag describes herself as an "ambassadrice de la culture," her escape from American culture as "very American." Prompted to consider the "Platonic" element of A12, she cites McLuhan and Derrida on the privileging of voice over writing, and the modern counter-movement on behalf of the image.

F47 "In beiden Welten leben." Peter Hölzle. *Evangelische Kommentare* (Stuttgart) No. 3 (Mar. 1979):146–8.

Prompted to consider her relationship to Europe, Sontag avers that her teachers (Hannah Arendt, Herbert Marcuse) had already put her in contact with German culture, while allowing that contemporary Paris is not the mythical site she once thought it. Denies that Jews play as large an economic role in contemporary America as they did in Weimar Germany, while allowing that they consume culture at a rate far in excess of "puritanical Protestants." Expresses admiration for Germany's "cultural multiplicity," especially for Hans-Jürgen Syberberg.

F48 "Radicalu wiru no sokudoni notte/In Step with the Radical Will," Part I. Seigow Matsuoka. *Object Magazine Yu* No. 4 (Apr. 1979): 169–84.

Discusses the relation between isolation and imagination, the difference between American and Japanese conceptions of space, of borders, of religion; Sontag's spare apartment, the (friendly) immateriality of books vs. the (obtrusive) materiality of images; the American habit of using religious metaphors to express admiration or aspiration, despite its being "a profoundly unreligious country"; attention vs. appropriation.

F49 "Sontag in Interview." Paul Ableman. *Books and Bookmen* (London), Apr. 1979, 34–5.

Discusses the relations of Victorian to experimental fiction, of British to American fiction; the audience and extra-literary function of nineteenth-century

writers, i.e., as heroes of intellectual liberty, a role less available to contemporary Western writers; the cultural role of books vs. films.

F50 “Sontag in Greenwich Village: An Interview.” Paul Brennan. *London Magazine*, Apr.–May 1979, 93–103.

Prompted to reconsider “Notes on ‘Camp,’” Sontag emphasizes how “tactical” words can be, how “avant-garde” can be used as much to defend as attack the idea of “standards.” Her interest in Romanticism and its problematics are discussed, also her (ambivalent) relationships to publishers, reviewers, the classroom. (A WorldCat entry indicates this interview may have been circulated in Australia as an audiotape entitled “Susan Sontag Interviewed.”)

F50a “Susan Sontag w Greenwich Village.” Trans. (Pol.) Maria Olejniczak. *Literatura na świecie* (Warsaw) No. 9 (1979): 324–9.  
Translates and abridges F50.

F51 “Radicularu wiru no sokudoni notte/In Step with the Radical Will,” Part II. Seigow Matsuoka. *Object Magazine Yu* No. 6 (June 1979):161–76.

Continues F48. Sontag discusses the complexities of existence vs. the anxiety of judgments, the pathos and injustice of death and the (impossible) concept of immortality, the sadness of human sexuality and our fatedness to cultural extremism à la Nietzsche, the nihilistic renunciation of progress vs. the infantilism of Maoism; the opposition of conceptual (“throw away”) art and “true art,” of American and European intellectuals, women in Japan vs. women in America, the ambivalent values of modernism.

F52 “Petit déjeuner chez Sontag.” Michel Braudeau. *L'Express*, 9 June 1979, 28–30.

Sontag comments on French cultural stasis, likens Lacan to Jerry Lewis; discusses A13 and A12, her own experience of cancer and the necessity of opposing clichés.

F53 “Le diagnostics de Susan Sontag.” Catherine David. *Le Nouvel Observateur* (Paris) No. 763 (25 June 1979):70–2.

Sontag remarks upon differences between American and French intellectuals, as regards the latter’s more positive relation to television and journalism; compares the coterie aspect of literary reviewing in France to the solitude of American writers, though this “puritanism” has the virtue of consistency, as compared to the position shifting of the *Tel quel* group. Life in New York City is discussed, as is the French tendency to export rather than import ideas, though on Sontag’s view the French have little to export at present, in part for an unwillingness to embrace outside influences.

F54 “Argomento: Pirandello: Come tu lo vuoi.” Leonardo Sciascia. *L'Espresso* (Rome), 15 July 1979, 67–8, 71, 73.

F54a “Wokół Pirandella: Rozmawiają: Susan Sontag i Leonardo Sciascia.” Trans. (Pol.) Anna Wasilewska. *Literatura na świecie* (Warsaw) No. 4 (1980):364–71.

F54b “As You Desire It.” Trans. (Eng.) Kathy S.Leonard. In *Conversations with Susan Sontag*, edited by Leland Poague, 137–42. Jackson: Univ. Press of Mississippi, 1995.

F55 “Hyousou to shinsou no aida.” Yasonari Takahashi. *Sekai* (Tokyo) No. 407 (Oct. 1979):260–75.

Ponders the “front and back” of numerous issues in politics and culture. Discusses semiotics via Barthes and Lacan. Sontag adduces the Japanese attitude toward cancer as instancing cultural prohibition, formality; Takahashi adduces Chomsky on Descartes to describe the suppression of the subject in Japanese linguistics, as a “back” or implicit element of discourse, as in *I, etcetera*. They compare Eastern “nothingness” to Western egotism, the plight of women in traditional and advanced cultures; discuss the complex relations of art and politics, of Foucault to Nietzsche, of art and memory.

F56 “Susan Sontag: ‘Quelle tristesse, quand toutes les femmes seront sages!’” Michelle Coquillat. *F magazine* (Paris) No. 20 (Oct. 1979):26–7, 29, 32, 36.

Sontag advocates extremism on behalf of feminism while defining herself as an independent thinker. Asked about her relationship to France, she cites André Gide as her first model, while granting that she suppressed his phallocentrism. Compares the “excessive ugliness” of American culture to French xenophobia, especially the blindness to communist oppression required by “left” political language.

F57 “Susan Sontag: The *Rolling Stone* Interview.” Jonathan Cott. *Rolling Stone*, 4 Oct. 1979, 46–53.

F57a “Susan Sontag: The *Rolling Stone* Interview.” In *Conversations with Susan Sontag*, edited by Leland Poague, 106–36. Jackson: Univ. Press of Mississippi, 1995.

F58 “Incontro con la scrittrice dopo le critiche: Sontag: nel mio Pirandello c’è tutta la rabbia d’una donna.” Mirella Appiotti. *La Stampa* (Turin), 27 Oct. 1979.

Sontag defends the disparities (of acting styles, staging conventions) in her production of *As You Desire Me*, as reflecting the play’s tensions; emphasizes how the central female character strives to move from object of desire to subject.

F59 “Une émigrante de la pensée.” Jean-Louis Servan-Schreiber. Paris: Emmission “Questionnaire.” Transcription of an interview broadcast 13 Dec. 1979 on TF1 (Television Française).

- F59a* “An Emigrant of Thought.” Trans. (Eng.) Clyde Thogmartin. In *Conversations with Susan Sontag*, edited by Leland Poague, 143–64. Jackson: Univ. Press of Mississippi, 1995. Reprints [F59](#), somewhat abridged.
- F60* “Styl—to jeszcze nie ycie.” Monika Beyer. *Polityka* (Warsaw) No. 22 (31 May 1980):9.
- F60a* “A Life Style Is Not a Life: An Interview with Susan Sontag.” *Polish Perspectives* (Warsaw) 23.9 (1980):42–6. Prints the English text of [F60](#), slightly abridged.
- F60b* “A Life Style Is Not Yet a Life.” Trans. (Eng.) Monika Jankowiak. In *Conversations with Susan Sontag*, edited by Leland Poague, 165–74. Jackson: Univ. Press of Mississippi, 1995.
- F61* “Lubię due.” Mariusz Ziomecki, Jerzy Siemasz. *Kultura* (Warsaw) No. 23 ([8 June?] 1980):3–4.  
 Prompted to discuss Polish literature, Sontag discusses her own Polish heritage; denies that her case against interpretation precludes an interest in Polish literature, because literature serves many functions; urges that writers must keep the “doors and windows” of culture open.
- F62* “Sprzeczka o film amerykański.” Piotr Kaminski, Piotr Szymanowski. *Dialog* (Warsaw) 25.8 (Aug. 1980):124–8.  
 Asked about the dearth of American drama (vs. film), Sontag observes that American writers tend toward specialization (prose, poetry, etc.) and disputes the premise that commercial American films are (any longer) a measure of artistic quality. Takes the underground film scene to be equally as “dreary” as Off-Broadway theater; admits admiration for Pauline Kael as a critic of American culture while avowing that most American film critics “are weak and average.” Blames the illiteracy of Americans generally for the decline of poetry.
- F63* “Publishing: The Eclectic Susan Sontag.” Herbert Mitgang. *New York Times*, 10 Oct. 1980, C31.
- F64* “Być otwartym na świat.” Halina Filipowicz. *Odra* (Breslau) No. 11 (Nov. 1980):74–5.  
 Sontag discusses her writerly beginnings, her distance from structuralism, the writer’s responsibility; disavows university creative writing classes, observes America’s lack of a “rich cultural environment.” Her direction of Pirandello is discussed, her views on film and women’s studies (“one of the best things to happen in the 20th century”).
- F65* “For Susan Sontag, the Illusions of the 60’s Have Been Dissipated.” Michiko Kakutani. *New York Times*, 11 Nov. 1980, [C5](#).

- F65a* “For Susan Sontag, the Illusions of the 60’s Have Been Dissipated.” *The New York Times Biographical Service* 11 (1980):1644–5.
- F66 “Susan Sontag: Me, Etcetera....” Charles Ruas. *Soho News*, 12–18 Nov. 1980, 8–9, 16.
- \*\*\* “Susan Sontag.” In *Conversations with American Writers*, by Charles Ruas, 182–7. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1985. “Part I” of this two-part “Conversation” (see F82) clearly derives from F66, though the Knopf text is edited for brevity. Language appears here that was *not* in F66— about the difference between directing films and directing theater or opera, about the connection of *Under the Sign of Saturn* to her other work (“The essays are stories about minds”). See also F73.
- \*\*\* “Susan Sontag.” In *Conversations with American Writers*, by Charles Ruas, 182–7. London: Quartet Books, 1986. See F82b.
- F66a* “Susan Sontag: Me, Etcetera....” In *Conversations with Susan Sontag*, edited by Leland Poague, 175–82. Jackson: Univ. Press of Mississippi, 1995.
- F67 “Interview with Susan Sontag.” Wendy Lesser. *Threepenny Review* No. 7 (Fall 1981):6–7.
- F67a* “Interview with Susan Sontag.” In *Conversations with Susan Sontag*, edited by Leland Poague, 192–8. Jackson: Univ. Press of Mississippi, 1995.
- F68 “The Habits of Consciousness.” Roger Copeland. *Commonweal*, 13 Feb. 1981, 83–7.
- F68a* “The Habits of Consciousness.” In *Conversations with Susan Sontag*, edited by Leland Poague, 183–91. Jackson: Univ. Press of Mississippi, 1995.
- F69 “Susan Sontag sotto il segno di saturno.” Paola Decina Lombardi. *Effe* (Milan) No. 3 (Mar. 1982):29–31.
- Quizzed about the (erotically) “liberating” elements of her short fiction, Sontag adduces the obsessiveness of writing, of the resort to travel when writing is not possible; allows the similarity of her writing and photography, in that both express a surrealist, fragmentary, modern aesthetic.

F70 “Comunismo uguale tirannia?” Lucio Lombardo Radice. Trans. (Ital.) Christina Mariotti. *L'Espresso* (Rome), 11 Apr. 1982, 96–7, 99–102, 104.

Sontag allows the (anti-imperialist) oppositional value of communism, but insists that life under communist regimes is “horrible,” that it is self-delusion to believe that Bolshevism is the single source of human progress.

F71 “Susan Sontag o la mujer sin qualidades.” Maria Dolores Aguilera. *Quimera* (Barcelona) No. 19 (May 1982):10–1, 13–5, 17.

Sontag discusses the “false precociousness” of her accelerated education and early marriage, her decision to become a writer—the true precociousness of continuing her “project” in the face of illness. The difficulty of essay writing leads to questions about intellectuals and politics; Sontag repeats her B67 claims about communism. Asked about cultural models, Sontag pleads her European loyalties, her admiration of Canetti, Godard, Syberberg; notes the solitariness of American writers, the destructiveness of Burrough’s language; adduces Riefenstahl as an “antimodel,” as exemplifying (like Artaud) an “extremity” she finds horrifying, nihilistic. Takes modernism, per *On Photography*, as her overriding theme; takes art as the modern abode of spirituality, though modern art tends to implode under the burdens of consciousness and novelty. Decries the death of cinema, while praising its enrichment of other forms. Concludes via discussion of Sontag’s fiction, chiefly A1.

F72 “PW Interviews Susan Sontag.” Miriam Berkley. *Publishers Weekly*, 22 Oct. 1982, 6–8.

Sontag discusses her early taste for European literature, her indebtedness to Poe and Hawthorne, her desire to move to New York and write for *Partisan Review*, her taste for Djuna Barnes and Nathanael West, the agony of writing well in the face of too much to do and say (“a subject and a meta-subject”), the difference between essay and fiction writing, her reluctance to do A18, the controversies over “Notes on ‘Camp’” and her 1982 Town Hall talk, the “American” quality of her international interests, her (then) current writing projects.

F73 “Susan Sontag: Past, Present and Future.” Charles Ruas. *New York Times Book Review*, 24 Oct. 1982, 11, 39–40.

Discusses Sontag’s “Town Hall” speech and A18, noting the continuities and discontinuities of her career, her constant “flight” from her past work, the relatively genderless politics of writing, the public dialogue initiated by “Notes on ‘Camp,’” the crises that followed the making of her first two films and the onset of her cancer, her regret that “Trip to Hanoi” was omitted from the *Reader*, the way her essay on Roland Barthes brings her (always ambivalent) concern with “the esthetic way of looking at the world” full circle. Some passages of this profile piece derive from F66. See also F82.

F74 “A Conversation with Susan Sontag.” Amy Lippman. *Harvard Advocate* 117 (Fall 1983):2–4, 26.

F74a "A Conversation with Susan Sontag." In *Conversations with Susan Sontag*, edited by Leland Poague, 199–205. Jackson: Univ. Press of Mississippi, 1995.

F75 "Susan Sontag: 'Europa ama la barbarie.'" Manuel García. *Tiempo* [Mexico, D.F.] No. 49 (Apr. 18–25, 1983):111–3.

Distances herself from "la barbarie americana" by noting the European popularity of Charles Bukowsky, who exemplifies American (non)culture. Avows herself an American writer; compares government support of art as cold war propaganda to a general absence of subventions in contemporary America. Praises Octavio Paz (vs. García Márquez) for his criticism of repressive communist regimes.

F76 "Writing It Out: An Interview with Susan Sontag." Nancy DuVergne Smith. *Realia* (Wellesley, MA), Dec. 1983, 14–5.

Sontag addresses the past as the proper subject of liberal education, the internationality of contemporary literature; notes the stylization of even the most naturalistic literary dialogue, the writerly problem of finding a voice, the influence of Poe.

F77 "The Short-Lived Influence of Most Writers." Peter Mandel. *Brown Alumni Monthly*, Apr. 1984, 43–5.

Ponders the relations of writing and teaching, the value of university writing programs, of experience ("Writing is not made out of experience, it's made out of language"), of planning and intuition, of good to not-so-good literature ("I think you cannot be other than a pluralist in literature").

F78 "Susan Sontag's Simple Philosophy of Susan Sontag." Kim Upton. *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, 25 Apr. 1984, 4D.

Chiefly interesting for Sontag's brief remarks about her appearance in Woody Allen's *Zelig*.

F79 "Susan Sontag: 'García Márquez es un cínico.'" L.D. *Cambio 16* (Madrid) No. 658 (9–16 July 1984):101, 103.

Compares Julio Cortázar to García Márquez in their support for Cuba despite Castro's repression of dissent; discusses the prevalence of "left" vs. "right" political metaphors as a legacy of the Spanish Civil War.

F80 "Susan Sontag." Arthur Holmberg. *Performing Arts Journal* 9.1 (1985): 28–30.

Briefly discusses Sontag's productions of Kundera's *Jacques and His Master* and Pirandello's *As You Desire Me*. She comments on the differences between Italian and American actors, on the "plastic" quality of her direction, on the differences between theater and film.

F81 "Susan Sontag at Washington University, April 24, 1984." *River Styx* (St. Louis) No. 17 (1985):7–14.

Quizzed about "silence" and "camp," Sontag contextualizes her essays; B11 was written for Lionel Trilling, for example, and Hermann Broch is named as the "unnamed" sage of C4. Discusses speculation in essays and fiction, formal

elements of each, rereading [A1](#), the relation between expressiveness and autobiography.

F82 “Susan Sontag.” Charles Ruas. In *Conversations with American Writers*, 180–96. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1985.

A career sketch precedes a two-part interview. Part 1 derives from [F66](#). The language of Part 2 clearly lies behind [F73](#), though much of Part 2 *only* appears here.

Asked about [A18](#), Sontag credits her publisher with the idea for a reader, and notes how disputes over its contents evidenced her ambivalence about a premature retrospective. Prompted to compare herself to Sylvia Plath, Sontag notes how Plath was published earlier in life, and had different experiences and (more conventional) models. Avows that she never felt any conflict between being a writer and being a woman—though her earliest models were mostly men (Poe, London, Hugo, Gide, etc.). Discusses her ambivalence about the public dialogue into which “Against Interpretation” and “Notes on ‘Camp’” were drawn. Describes her writing career as having “distinct periods”; takes “Writing Itself” as “a farewell to certain ideas.” Discusses her desire to avoid solipsism in fiction while eschewing “the conventions of realism.” Distinguishes herself from Barthes on the grounds that “Barthes was a university writer” in ways she is not.

\**F82a* “An Interview with Susan Sontag.” *Dialogue* No. 71 (1986): 27–33.

Per the United States Information Agency, this is a reprint of [F82](#). (*Dialogue* is only one version of a periodical distributed worldwide, except, by law, in the United States. Though variously titled and numbered, the issue in question in every case is the first number of the 1986 publishing year.)

*F82b* “Susan Sontag.” In *Conversations with American Writers*, by Charles Ruas, 180–96. London: Quartet Books, 1986.

F83 “An Interview with Susan Sontag.” Eileen Manion and Sherry Simon. *Canadian Journal of Political and Social Theory* 9.1–2 (Winter-Spring 1985):7–15.

*F83a* “L’original et la copie.” Sherry Simon. Trans. (Fr.) Sherry Simon. *Spirale* (Montreal) No. 49 (Feb. 1985):3, 15.  
Translates portions of [F83](#).

*F83b* “An Interview with Susan Sontag.” In *Conversations with Susan Sontag*, edited by Leland Poague, 206–14. Jackson: Univ. Press of Mississippi, 1995.

F84 “Susan Sontag: Always on to the Next Thing.” Kevin Kelly. *Boston Globe*, 13 Jan. 1985, [B1](#), [B4](#).

Sontag's "next thing" is directing Kundera's *Jacques and His Master* in Boston. Describes Sontag by reference to "Project for a Trip to China." Her dispute with the *Soho News* over her Town Hall remarks is discussed at length.

*F84a* "Writer Susan Sontag Extends Her Influence in Theater Director Debut." *Chicago Tribune*, 3 Feb. 1985, sec. 13, 26–7.

F85 "Nadine Gordimer and Susan Sontag: In Conversation: 'Even the Most Private Aspects of Life Are Penetrated by Politics.'" *Listener* (London), 23 May 1985, 16–7.

Annotated at [E24](#) as "Voices: Writers and Politics"; the [F85](#) version is considerably abbreviated compared to [E24](#) and [F85a](#).

*F85a* "Writers and Politics." In *Voices: Writers and Politics*, edited by Bill Bourne, Udi Eichler, and David Herman, 25–39. Nottingham: Spokesman; Atlantic Highlands, NJ: The Hobo Press, 1987.

Transcribes [E24](#).

*F85b* "Det gamle dør, det ny kan ikke fødes: En samtale mellem Nadine Gordimer og Susan Sontag." Trans. (Dan.) Nina Gross. *Hog* (Copenhagen) No. 52 (Aug. 1988):2–7.

Translates and abridges [F85a](#).

*F85c* "Nadine Gordimer and Susan Sontag: In Conversation." In *Conversations with Susan Sontag*, edited by Leland Poague, 215–21. Jackson: Univ. Press of Mississippi, 1995.

F86 "An Interview with Susan Sontag." Larry Bograd. *Muse* (Denver), June-July 1985, 1, 10.

Asked about her writerly relation to the West, Sontag observes that "in America culture is optional," by contrast with Europe; that New York is a "capital city"; that nineteenth-century novels were more mind-expanding than the static Arizona folklore she grew up with. Avows the vitality of regional theater, the corruption of art by money, and the necessity of recruiting new audiences for the arts.

F87 "Vasos comunicantes: Un diálogo entre Susan Sontag y Jorge Luis Borges." Trans. (Span.) Christian Kupchik. *Quimera* (Barcelona) No. 52 (1986): 29–33.

Sontag and Borges ponder literary fame or influence, especially the influence of New England writers, of Twain, of language-as-culture generally; discuss their common interest in Japanese literature, in miniature or instantaneous or total forms; discuss attitudes toward publishing and their earlier works, differences between literature and non-literature, between poetry and prose, among kinds of readers.

- F87a “Skacheni s’ dove.” Trans. Boryana Tsoneva. *Panorama* No. 2 (1989):47–8.  
A Bulgarian translation of the first half of F87.
- \*F87b “Yazar bol, ama...” Trans. (Turkish) Yavuz Baydar. *Cerceve* No. 145 (1989):16–8.

F88 “Kiki no naka no gendai-ongaku: Gendai-geijutsu wo kataru.” Akira Unami. *Ongaku-geijutsu* (Tokyo) 44.1 (Jan. 1986):77–83.

Describes the “crisis” of contemporary music as the crisis of an audience unaccustomed to the difficult; describes the current trend in music as emphasizing “mixed” or “impure” forms, along the “totalizing” lines of Wagnerian opera. Asked about the relationship between philosophy and postmodernism, Sontag insists upon the singularity of particular artists.

F89 “Kuvien sarkijä.” Kirsti Simonsuuri. *Suomen kuvalehti* (Helsinki), 11 Apr. 1986, 58–9, 62.

Asked about her “European” habits of thought, Sontag notes the paradoxically “American” aspect of her self-induced Europhilia, her fascination with the eighteenth century, her admiration of writers like Walter Benjamin and Simone Weil. Discusses her decision not to teach, the pressures of American intellectual culture, the mystery and complexity of fiction; decries the way “market” value is displacing literary value.

F90 “Susan Sontag: ‘El feminismo americano esta amesazado.’” Mari Sol Padilla. *Mujeres* (Madrid) 3.11 (Apr.–May 1986):54–7.

Discusses the state of New York City and of American women under Reagan, especially when money is needed to do political battle and women still make far less than men; decries the extremes of poverty and class in American cities, the disciplinary aspects of popular (television) culture, the maltreatment of AIDS sufferers.

F91 “Susan Sontag: Che ci faccio lassù tutta sola.” In *Ortiche and Margherite: Fra lepieghe dell’intervista*, by Laura Lilli, 163–75. Verona: Essedue Edizioni, 1987.

Comprises a headnote and an interview, the latter reported as first appearing in *la Repubblica*, 10 Sept. 1985.

“Susan Sontag.” Discusses the rushed circumstances of the interview and adduces an essay by Sebastian de Grazia on the (asymmetrical, culturally relative) implications of “left” vs. “right” political terminology.

“Che ci faccio lassù tutta sola.” Asked about political labels, Sontag urges the “bankruptcy” and imprecision of left vs. right terminology, criticizes press coverage of her Town Hall talk, and decries the lack of political sophistication among Reagan-era Americans, who talk shamelessly about money when not watching television. Allows the relative “openness” of American culture, while giving it a negative formulation (“the situation is not blocked”).

F92 “Susan Sontag.” Elizabeth Ramsden Eames et al. *Papyrus* (Carbondale, IL) 1 (Spring 1987):51–61.

Discusses the relationships between fiction and criticism. Prompted to discuss the social obligations of art and artists, Sontag agrees that “all art is doing cultural work” while expressing reservations about prescriptive declarations, which threaten to result in cultural “homogeneity.”

F93 “Leven in de schaduw van de angst: De visie van Susan Sontag op aids.” Simone Koudijs. *Opzij* (Amsterdam) No. 9 (Sept. 1987):14–6.

Ponders different approaches to AIDS and to sexuality, in England, in Holland, in America. Notes that AIDS has made men fear sex, as women have always feared it; argues that AIDS is not a sign of moral decay but of normal human activity, that advocating monogamy is largely a tactic to deny sexual freedom to women, who only recently achieved it.

F94 “Susan Sontag no volverá al ensayo de ideas.” Angela Rodicio. *Diario 16* (Madrid), 27 Sept., 1987, 43.

Sontag resists being classified as postmodern, as following the inspiration of Central European writers; decries conventionalism in general. Cites the fact of censorship to suggest the truth value of photography, despite her [A12](#) critique of the medium. See [G85](#).

F95 “Susan Sontag o la pasión por las palabras.” Marithelma Costa and Adelaida López. Trans. (Span.) Carmen Sarasúa. *Revista de accidente* (Madrid), 3d ser., No. 79 (Dec. 1987):109–26.

*F95a* “Susan Sontag.” In *Las dos caras de la escritura: Conversaciones con Mario Benedetti, María Corti, Umberto Eco, Sylvia Molloy, Carlos París, Ricardo Piglia, Xavier Rubert de Ventas, Ernesto Sábato, Susan Sontag, Gonzalo Torrente Ballester, Nilita Vientós Gastón*, edited by Marithelma Costa and Adelaida López, 179–95. Puerto Rico: Editorial Sin Nombre, Editorial de la Universidad de Puerto Rico, 1988.

[F95](#) carries a footnote indicating that it “forms a part” of *Las dos caras de la escritura*. [F95a](#) thus “reprints” [F95](#) with only minor revision (e.g., [F95](#) lists Van Gogh as a “martyr of seriousness” along with Kafka and Nietzsche; he is dropped from the list in [F95a](#)).

*F95b* “Susan Sontag: The Passion for Words.” Trans. (Eng.) Kathy S.Leonard. In *Conversations with Susan Sontag*, edited by Leland Poague, 222–36. Jackson: Univ. Press of Mississippi, 1995.

Derives from the English interview translated in [F95](#).

F96 “Susan Sontag [sic]: ‘Soy feminista por temperamento.’” M.<sup>a</sup> Luisa Blanco. *Elle* (Madrid), Dec. 1987, 76–8, 80, 82.

Expresses a preference for fiction over criticism; sees literature as coming more from literature than personal experience. Disavows the confusion of writing and celebrity or popularity. Asked about love, Sontag discusses her marriage, the value of companionship; asked about feminism, she discusses sexual stereotypes, her aversion to television (“modernism is a drug one must take in moderation”).

F97 “Under the Sign of Sontag.” Michael Cronin. *Graph* (Dublin) No. 5 (Autumn 1988):16–8.

Explores Sontag’s views on the gender politics of writing (all writers should “be judged by the same standards”), on the writer’s moral duty to language, on the distinction between stereotypes and inhumanity as it applies to Shakespeare and Conrad, on contemporary literary criticism, on the importance of “place” to writers (“I am condemned to cosmopolitanism”).

F98 “Style and Radical Will: An Interview with Susan Sontag.” Robert Enright. *Border Crossings* (Winnepeg) 7.2 (Apr. 1988):6–9.

Sontag distinguishes between having an interest and having “something to say”; between “American barbarism” and European culture; between those who “stow away” their discontent with “naked materialism” and those who don’t; between writing and preaching; between truth-as-paradox and simple “pluralism”; between totality and structure; feeling and thinking, or feeling and temperament; writing then from writing (autobiographically) now; mental vs. physical travel.

F99 “Sontag diz que há uma superpopulação de escritores.” Jair Rattner. *Fohla de S.Paulo*, 28 May 1988, A-31.

Asked about the “situation of world literature” at a writers’ conference, Sontag attacks the tendency to identify trends, to define (national) schools; she prefers to see writers as individuals, describes “Trip to Hanoi” as “absolutely atypical” in its journalistic address to political issues rather than to “language.” Asked why a writer would write about photography, Sontag pleads her range of interests, and remarks that A12 uses photography as a pretext, as her essays on Benjamin and Barthes used their work as pretexts for meditations on melancholy, on pleasure.

F100 “Susan Sontag: En europé från amerikanska vischan.” Arne Ruth. *Dagens Nyheter* (Stockholm), 26 June 1988, 42–3.

Sontag’s journey “to Europe from the American Sticks” is recounted in this profile, set in the newly opened Musée d’Orsay, which Sontag likens to Nazi-era kitsch in its side-by-side display of masterpieces and non-art. Asked if her B11 advocacy of camp anticipated postmodernism, Sontag notes that aesthetic play depends upon aesthetic standards, even modernist standards, which the art of Warhol and Cage seeks finally to overturn in a destructive “democratization of art.”

F101 “Közép-európaiság mint metafora: New York-i beszélgetés Susan Sontaggal.” Júlia Váradi. Trans. (Hungarian) Júlia Váradi. *Élet és irodalom* (Budapest), 30 Sept. 1988, 7.

Sparked by Josef Brodsky's writers' conference denial of the importance of the "mideuropean" writer as a third term between East and West, Sontag ponders the relations between dominant and subordinate national (regional) literatures. Prompted to discuss the "optimistic" aspects of American culture, Sontag denies that educated Americans are universally optimistic, and cites the sad state of American secondary education (and television) as reason enough for pessimism. Grants that pessimism vs. optimism is a coarse distinction, while asserting a right *not* to be identified "with the American value system" as it is commonly (mis) understood in Europe.

*F101a* "Środkowoeuropejskość jako metafora." Trans. (Pol.) Rafał Wiśniewski. *Konfrontacje* (Warsaw) No. 11 (Nov. 1988):20.

F102 "Stand Aside, Sisyphus." Richard Lacayo. *Time*, 24 Oct. 1988, 86–8.

Sontag comments on the fragmentary form of her writing, on falsely equating her writing with her tastes, on her Town Hall address and her aversion to television ("it goes too slow").

*F102a* "Graciosa, informal, implacable." *APSI* (Santiago) No. 281 (1988):xiii–xiv, retr.  
A Spanish translation and abridgment of [F102](#). See [B44j](#).

F103 "The Passionate Mind." Helen Benedict. *New York Woman*, Nov. 1988, 74–9.

Emphasizes the irony in the fact that Sontag's "aloof" public persona is increasingly spotlighted while "in all other ways she is moving toward the personal," as evidenced in the passionate anger of *Illness as Metaphor* and *AIDS and Its Metaphors*. David Rieff confirms the anger and "avidity" with which his mother fought her own cancer. The pleasures and ambivalences of their mother/son relationship are discussed by both. Concludes with a résumé covering Sontag's personal life, her education, etc.

*F103a* "The *Passionate* Susan Sontag: A Celebrated Intellectual Crusades for Human Dignity." *Chicago Tribune*, 11 Dec. 1988, sec. 6, 1, 6.  
Abridges [F103](#).

*F103b* "The Passionate Mind." In *Portraits in Print: A Collection of Profiles and the Stories Behind Them*, by Helen Benedict, 19–36. New York: Columbia Univ. Press, 1991.  
Prints a longer version of [F103](#) plus a lengthy "Sontag Commentary" detailing how [F103](#) came about. In some cases—a question about Sontag's marriage—the "commentary"

version of the story quite changes the tenor or import of Sontag's remarks.

F104 "Az író nem a tények krónikása." Trans. (Hungarian) Anna Földes. *Nők lapja* (Budapest) No. 27 (1989):8–9.

Though unhappy with racial or gender "tokenism," Sontag expresses surprise that women writers play so slight a role in Hungarian literary circles; distinguishes political journalism (chronicling facts) from the political indirectness of literature.

F105 "Interview with Susan Sontag." Lisa Low. *Cross Currents* 8 (1989):185–93.

Discusses the differences of American and European theater, especially funding differences; distinguishes classical (hence reinterpretable) plays from contemporary works; ponders the relation of romanticism to modernism via Diderot and Dostoyevsky, while avowing a tactical preference for Diderot's rationalism; discusses the fatalism of *Jacques and His Master*, the difficulty of staging (vs. cutting between) different time periods, the melancholy of staging a pre-revolutionary story in a post-revolutionary era.

F106 "Susan Sontag, as Image and as Herself." Richard Bernstein. *New York Times*, 26 Jan. 1989, C17.

F107 "Susan Sontag's Appetite for Life." Leah Garchik. *San Francisco Chronicle*, 3 Feb. 1989, E1, E10.

F108 "Notes on Sontag." Jonathan Mandell. *Newsday*, 7 Feb. 1989, sec. 2, 4–5, 20.

Comprises six numbered sections. (1) Recounts a public reading circa A20b. (2) Though Sontag "will bristle" and "berate" the interviewer, the interview itself runs "longer than she had agreed to." (3) Compares Sontag to Jane Fonda, Allan Bloom; discusses the response to B11. (4) Summarizes A13. (5) Discusses the public response to AIDS, and to *AIDS*; Sontag decries "facile pessimism." (6) Members of the Gay Men's Chorus discuss the importance of Sontag's work in their lives.

F109 "*AIDS and Its Metaphors: A Conversation with Susan Sontag.*" Kenny Fries. *Coming Up!* (San Francisco) 10.6 (Mar. 1989): 49–50.

F109a "A Conversation with Susan Sontag." In *Conversations with Susan Sontag*, edited by Leland Poague, 255–60. Jackson: Univ. Press of Mississippi, 1995.

F110 "Susan Sontag." Jordan Mejias. *Frankfurter Allgemeine Magazin*, 10 Mar. 1989, 10–6, 18, 20, 22.

Takes Sontag's primary theme to be the acknowledgment of marginal or minority perspectives. Sontag's writing plans—a new collection of essays, a book on Japan—prompt discussion of her aversion to essays and preference for filmmaking.

F111 “Ik denk dat mijn boeken intelligenter zijn dan ik.” Ageeth Scherphuis. *Vrij Nederland* (Amsterdam), 18 Mar. 1989, 3.

Sontag expresses distress at the passivity of British reactions to the death threats against Salman Rushdie, criticizes the negative reactions to *The Satanic Verses* and to [A20a](#), and bemoans the immaturity of the view that thinking is confined to intellectuals (and vice versa).

F112 “La magnifica ossessione.” Antonio Monda. *Il Mattino* (Naples), 24 Mar. 1989, 14.

Links her own obsessions to those of her “volcano lover”; contests the claim that only “provincial” voices are authentic, while allowing its force in the Italian context; bemoans the homogenization of Europe while noting how differences remain; “Italian” painting is different in New York than in London, say. Describes the debate of words and images as a cultural obsession, though increasingly she sides with words.

F113 “The Sontag Metaphor: From the Author, an Elliptical View on AIDS and Its Implications.” Michael Specter. *Washington Post*, 25 Mar. 1989, [D1](#), [D11](#).

F114 “Sontag’s Aim: Strip AIDS Metaphors of Inhuman Power.” Chauncey Mabe. *Des Moines Register*, 26 Mar. 1989, 4C.

F115 “Man måste försvara allvaret: Ett samtal med Susan Sontag.” Stefan Jonsson. *BLM* (Stockholm) 58 (Apr. 1989):84–93.

*F115a* “Man må försvara Alvoret.” Trans. (Norw.) Gunnell Malmström. *Vinduet (Oslo)* No. 3 (1989):10–18.

*F115b* “One Must Defend Seriousness: A Talk with Susan Sontag.” In *Conversations with Susan Sontag*, edited by Leland Poague, 237–54. Jackson: Univ. Press of Mississippi, 1995.

F116 “Interpreting AIDS.” Carl Miller. *City Limits* (London), 30 Mar.–6 Apr. 1989, 17.

Passages of [A13](#) and [A20a](#) stand as questions; Sontag’s “answers” discuss the genesis of each book, their literary affiliations and ambitions; discuss the irrationality of reactions to illness, especially in the “psychologizing” (and moralizing) of AIDS, especially from the religious right, as foretelling a “restoration of Victorian values.”

F117 “On Susan Sontag.” Terry Philpot. *Community Care* (Sutton, UK) No. 758 (13 Apr. 1989):26–7.

Sontag discusses her motive for writing on AIDS (to deal with grief), her hopes for [A20a](#) (“to introduce a certain amount of scepticism”), the privilege accorded to “health” as a value, her error in thinking AIDS could not be “psychologized.”

F118 “Gyöngé a magyar értelmiség.” Júlia Váradi. *168 Óra* (Budapest), 27 June 1989, 17–8.

Sontag expresses astonishment that Hungarian intellectuals should distance themselves from “mideuropeanism” at the moment when its political goal of independence from the Soviet Union is being realized; attributes the pessimism to economic problems; urges that capitalism not be idealized.

F119 “Provocadora, radical e machadiana.” Rohan Lima. *Jornal do Brasil* (Rio de Janeiro), 9 July 1989, 13.

Sontag discusses her esteem for Machado de Assis, her literary ambition (to have readers fifty years in the future), the mythology of AIDS, perestroika in the Soviet Union, the value of Marx and the failure of Leninism, the conflict between economic development and the ecology.

*F119a* “Susan Sontag: Na vertigem do pensamento.” *O Liberal* (Pará, Brazil), 9 July 1989.

Most of [F119a](#) corresponds to questions 8–11 of [F119](#); questions only asked here address the publication itinerary of [A20b](#), Brazilian attitudes toward AIDS.

*F119b* “Susan Sontag: Estilos da vontade radical.” *O Liberal* (Pará, Brazil), 10 July 1989.

Corresponds to questions 1–7 of [F119](#); questions only asked here address the relationship between style and ideas. Asked about favorite photographers, Sontag pleads her generalist credentials; asked about Brazilian interest in her work, she grants the contingency of reception, while hoping that good books will find their audiences.

*F119c* “Susan Sontag: Pensando o mundo.” *O Liberal* (Pará, Brazil), 11 July 1989.

Corresponds (roughly) to the last third of [F119](#).

F120 “Irodalom vagy propaganda?” Tamás Szőnyei. Trans. (Hungarian) Tamás Szőnyei. *Vilag* (Budapest), 3 Aug. 1989, 43.

Distinguishes between propaganda and great literature; between speech (as personal contact) and writing.

F121 “When Evil Is Attached to Illness.” Lori Rohlk. *Des Moines Register*, 4 July 1990, 2T.

F122 “Unser Körper ist Kein Schlachtfeld.” Maria Biel and Michael O.R.Kröner. *Stern Magazin* (Hamburg), 25 Oct. 1990, [169–74].

Asked about current disease metaphors, Sontag replies that the advent of AIDS has rendered cancer less powerful. Advised that AIDS discourse in Europe is highly dramatized, Sontag observes that the romanticizing of AIDS ignores lower-class and nonwhite victims. Avows that the middle-class fitness craze is symptomatic of modern alienation. Criticizes the “sick society” locution as a vulgar oversimplification, as a disavowal of the politics of power; takes the “organic” body politic metaphor as politically conservative à la Spengler.

F123 “Education of the Heart.” Harriett Gilbert. *New Statesman and Society*, 29 Mar. 1991, 23–4.

Takes Sontag’s delight in “language and ideas” as accounting for her “vastly exaggerated” reputation as a “campaigner.” Against the view that approval of “moderation” amounts to “conservatism,” Sontag cites her general defense of sexual and political pluralism, if also her skepticism regarding sexual brutality in contemporary cinema.

F124 “New York, Berlin, Gulf, and Tokyo....” Kazue Kobata. Trans. (Jap.) Kazue Kobata. *Esquire* (Tokyo), June 1991, 75–82.

Comments on the changing demographics of New York City; discusses American political naiveté, male violence, the violence of writing. Discusses the cultural politics of German reunification; of the Gulf War; of the changing relationship between America and the world in the post-communist era.

F125 “Susan Sontag Finds Romance.” Leslie Garis. *New York Times Magazine*, 2 Aug. 1992, 20–3, 31, 43.

Sontag comments on A28’s subtitle (which “sprang” her from the trap of “fictional self-consciousness”) and on her solitary childhood; Garis describes Sontag’s newly purchased flatcum-library, evidence of Sontag’s “hedonistic” addiction to reading. The last few paragraphs provide capsule statements of ethical standards and literary virtues (“To me, literature is a calling, even a kind of salvation”).

F125a “Susan Sontag Finds Romance.” *The New York Times Biographical Service* 23 (1992):962–7.

F125b “O, Angst and Other Word Games.” *Saturday Review* (London *Times*), 15 Aug. 1992, 4–6.

F126 “Susan Sontag Lightens Up.” Ellen Hopkins. *Los Angeles Times Magazine*, 16 Aug. 1992, 22–4, 26, 40.

Contrasts the coldly mythical Sontag to her warm-hearted reality as prologue to discussing *The Volcano Lover*.

F127 “Side by Side by Sontag.” Tom Shone. *Observer Magazine* (London), 13 Sept. 1992, 44–5.

Describes Sontag’s essays as weight training, *The Volcano Lover* as the pay off. Describes her as a (Europhile) collector à la William Hamilton. Recounts the Sontag vs. Camille Paglia imbroglio as instancing the “virulent myth which has made [Sontag] the subject of both hero-worship and vilification.”

F128 “Susan Sontag, Hot at Last.” Paula Span. *Washington Post*, 17 Sept. 1992, C1, C2.

F128a “Susan Sontag, Hot at Last.” In *Conversations with Susan Sontag*, edited by Leland Poague, 261–6. Jackson: Univ. Press of Mississippi, 1995.

F129 “The Life of a Head Girl.” Zoë Heller. *Independent on Sunday Review* (London), supplement, 20 Sept. 1992, 10, 12.

Describes the entertaining “romp” of A28 as defiantly confounding Sontag’s public image. Reactions to Sontag’s 1964 BBC appearance with Jonathan Miller raise the issue of Sontag’s “hauteur,” the development of which is sketched.

F130 “Sontag Erupts: The Author of *The Volcano Lover* Comes Out Smoking.” Christopher Lydon. *Boston Phoenix*, 27 Nov. 1992, sec. 3, 10.

Reference to Camille Paglia evokes contention over Sontag’s relationship to popular culture. Prompted to consider the autobiographical aspect of the last voice in A28, Sontag insists on the fictive or novelistic context as primary.

F131 “At the C Shop with Susan Sontag.” Ron Grossman. *Chicago Tribune*, 1 Dec. 1992, sec. S, 1–2.

Sontag returns to her student haunts at the University of Chicago; reflects on her education, her life, today’s students.

F132 “Only the Possible: An Interview with Susan Sontag.” Erika Munk. *Theater* 24.3 (1993):31–6.

Discusses Sontag’s decision to stage a play in Sarajevo; to stage only the first act of *Waiting for Godot*; the rehearsal process, the contingencies of casting and staging. Compares Beckett’s silent-comedy direction to Sontag’s melodramatic style; the play’s political and gender-political implications.

F133 “Raconter une histoire.” John Berger. Trans. (Fr.) Terry Lewis. *Mediterraneans* (Paris) [No. 2/3] (Summer 1993):211–32.

Discussing story types, Sontag avows that truth-telling and remembering are not the only models. Sees Berger as distinguishing oral from written literatures; advocates fantasy, the multiplicities allowed by written stories. Where Berger sees dreams as already significant, Sontag says dreams are already stories, contingent yet interpretable. Takes the recovery of “intensity” rather than the purging of “absurdity” as a primary value of fiction.

F134 “Die umzingelte Kultur.” Sigrid Löffler. *Profil* (Vienna) No. 10 (8 Mar. 1993):74–5.

Describes Sontag as without illusions, despairing of threats to the “encircled” European culture and to women’s rights yet highly productive, focused, and serious.

F135 “Susan Sontag agora só quer saber de ficção.” Luiz Zanin Oricchio. *Caderno* (Sao Paulo), 28 June 1993, sec. 2, 8.

Asked about American culture, Sontag decries strict separation of popular and elite culture, while avowing that mass culture can be “idiotic.” Asked about A28, Sontag expresses a preference for the polyphony of fiction over the monologue of essay writing.

\*F136 “Entre el poder y la pasión.” *Cultura y Nacion* (Buenos Aires), 8 July 1993, cover, 7.

F137 “El siglo XXI comienza con el sito de Sarajevo.” Alfonso Armada. *El País* (Madrid), 25 July 1993, 23.

- F137a* “Sarajevo.” *Guardian* (Manchester), 29 July 1993, supplement, 8–9.  
An English text of [F137](#).
- F137b* “Intervju.” Trans. (Serbo-Croat.) Vedrana Božinović. *Koktel* [Sarajevo?], Dec. 1993, 24.  
Translates [F137](#), slightly abbreviated.
- F137c* “The Twentyfirst Century Will Begin in Sarajevo.” In *Conversations with Susan Sontag*, edited by Leland Poague, 267–70. Jackson: Univ. Press of Mississippi, 1995.

**Addendum.** At the last instant, we acquired an interview with Sontag, by Rosario Fontova, published in *El Noticiero Universal* (Barcelona), 28 June 1984: “Susan Sontag, cine sin dinero para minorías” (p. 32). As it was occasioned by a retrospective showing of Sontag’s four feature films by La Semana de Cine de Barcelona, it is likely to be of more than usual interest.

## SECTION G

### Juvenilia and Miscellaneous

G1 "Opus." In *Vintage '48*. North Hollywood High School, 1948.

A seven-line poem.

G2 "Poem." In *Vintage '48*. North Hollywood High School, 1948.

A nine-line poem, in two stanzas.

G3 *Vintage '48*. Edited by Susan Sontag. North Hollywood High School, 1948.

Published in mimeograph, pages unnumbered. (Per G6, publication was scheduled for June.)

G4 "Democracy?" *Arcade*, 13 Feb. 1948, 2.

Takes Lincoln as a set of "American" facts "resolved into a legend" whose principles, if "acknowledged," are yet far from "realization in fact and action." Adduces the "vicious" facts of racism; urges teaching "equality in the schools" and legislating the end of segregation. Signed "Sue Sontag."

G5 "Viva la Slobbovia." *Arcade*, 16 Apr. 1948, 3.

An "ambassador" to Lower Slobbovia reports on the "remarkable similarity" between Americans and Slobbovians, despite the fact that "Sue Sontag" does not "know what they're thinking because [she doesn't] understand the language." Notes the aristocracy of "the second son and the third daughter," their annual bash-the-coconut ritual, the "nutshell" sayings of George Washington and Harry Truman, and concludes "there are just a few little things wrong here and there."

G6 "Staff to Edit Supplement." *Arcade*, 23 Apr. 1948, 1.

Announces plans for a literary supplement to the *Arcade*. Though G6 is not signed, "Sue Sontag" is listed as "Assistant First Page Editor" and is announced as editor for the literary magazine. She may well have written the announcement.

G7 "Prizes Offered for Magazine Name." *Arcade*, 1 May 1948, 1.

Seeks suggestions for a name and cover design for the *Arcade* literary supplement, in return for "glory, satisfaction, that inner thrill," and a free copy, thus saving the winner a dime to "buy something to read that you're really interested in, say, 'Flash Gordon Comics,' 'Jungle Terrors,' 'Honest-to-Gosh Confessions,' etc." Unsigned, though probably by Sontag.

G8 "Restrictions." *Arcade*, 3 May 1948, 2.

Contrasts the suffering majority to the irresponsible "few" whose littering helped put part of the main building off limits. Concludes by noting the dress

restrictions on female students at other area high schools, implying that things could be worse at North Hollywood. Signed "Sue Sontag."

G9 "Time to Get Up." *Arcade*, 17 May 1948, 3.

Compares "types of early-morning risers: happy ones and unhappy ones," the former of the "genus inhumanus," the latter the "genus deadtiredus." Though known as "Joe" in the sketch, the "unhappy" one drinks coffee and "is forced to think for himself," which is, à la "Sue Sontag," "a terrifying" prospect.

G10 From the Editor's Desk. *Arcade*, 22 Oct. 1948, 2.

Praises student cooperation with painting crews; anticipates installation of acoustic tiles that will muffle "screams about that chemistry test." Initialed "—S.S."; "Sue Sontag" appears on the masthead as "Editor-in-Chief."

G11 "Cinema Scoops." *Arcade*, 3 Nov. 1948, 3.

Reviews Olivier's *Hamlet* ("enough melodrama and action" to "fill a hundred Hollywood creations") and Hawks's *Red River*, which will bring Montgomery Clift "to immediate popularity and stardom" and which features "ten thousand head of cattle, with minor roles being played by John Wayne and Joan Dru." Signed "Sue Sontag."

G12 "Poem." *Arcade*, 3 Nov. 1948, 3.

Nearly the same as G2. The two stanzas of the *Vintage '48* version are published as one unit; "the breath with which I sign the air" in G2 becomes "the breath with which I sigh the air" in G12; and the poem is signed "Susan Sontag," the first time the full name is used in the newspaper.

G13 Untitled editorial. *Arcade*, 10 Nov. 1948, 2.

Meditates on Armistice Day and the prospects, given the "political surprise" of Truman's election and the new United Nations, for world peace. Urges informed political involvement as antidote to militarist idiocy and anti-communist hysteria, lest we throw away democracy's "noblest feature—the right of every person to express his own opinion." Initialed "—S.S."; listed as "Sue Sontag" on masthead.

G14 "Dial Aisle." *Arcade*, 24 Nov. 1948, 3.

Recommends the "Ozzie and Harriet" radio show (as an upscale "Blondie and Dagwood"); also a University Theater series of dramatizations of novels by Sinclair Lewis and H.G.Wells (and others) as well as the Agnes Moorehead radio-play rendition of "Sorry, Wrong Number," which "makes Barbara Stanwyck's performance in the screen adaptation look pretty sick." Signed "Sue Sontag."

G15 "Dial Aisle." *Arcade*, 8 Dec. 1948, 3.

Recommends a series of dramatized short stories (Chekov, Jules Verne) as well as "My Friend Irma." Unsigned, yet continuous ("back again") with G14.

G16 "Seven Years Later." *Arcade*, 8 Dec. 1948, 2.

Takes the anniversary of Pearl Harbor as occasion for asking "What did we fight for?" and "What have we got to show for it?" Answers the first question by reference to the Bill of Rights and America's "unequalled" degree of "freedom, stability, and prosperity"; answers the second by pairing victory and

responsibility, especially when opposition to communism threatens free speech. Concludes that “the future lies in the way we think today.” Signed “Sue Sontag.”

G17 “The Editors Speak....” *Arcade*, 15 Dec. 1948, 2.

Praises the “amazing, radical” gesture of appending the Bill of Rights to the Constitution; takes those rights as comprising “democracy,” as “de-categorizing,” as establishing the writer “as a separate entity to be reckoned with.” Urges their “liberal interpretation and unlimited continuance.” Initialed “—S.S.”

G18 From the Editor’s Desk. *Arcade*, 12 Jan. 1949, 2.

Ponders the “American character”—he tends to measure “the value of everything in terms of numbers,” always to champion “the underdog” (regardless of merit)—as prologue to considering the degree of irresponsibility on view in the latest student body elections. Urges an end to “sour grapes,” support of the new officers; but also a constant desire for improvement as being essential to democracy. Not signed or initialed, but probably Sontag, given its editorial page placement.

G19 “Sue’s Reviews.” *Arcade*, 12 Jan. 1949, 3.

Ponders the Oscar chances of several films; likes those of *Treasure of the Sierra Madre* and *The Snake Pit*, while describing *Joan of Arc* as “one of the biggest disappointments in movie history.” Predicts awards for Olivier and John Huston. Not signed, apart from the title.

G20 From the Editor’s Desk. *Arcade*, 19 Jan. 1949, 2.

Urges March of Dimes donations, wonders about the finality of “finals,” and advocates a “guilders club” (for students in industrial and commercial classes) in the face of inexplicable inertia. Signed “Sue Sontag.”

G21 From the Editor’s Desk. *Arcade*, 26 Jan. 1949, 2.

Takes jovial pleasure in offering end-of-term thanks for contributions to the *Arcade*. Signed “Sue Sontag.”

G22 Nichols, Mary Ellen, and Sue Sontag. “W ’49 History.” *Arcade*, 26 Jan. 1949, 2.

A time-travel frame story—as if “telecast” to viewers of station WXYZ in the year 2049—encloses a graduation ceremony and a reading of the class history (of class officers, athletic awards, theatrical productions, etc.). The “narrator” is almost left behind in 1949.

G23 “Dreams of Hippolyte.” *Provincetown Review* No. 4 (Summer 1961):58–64, 73–4.

Annotated as Chapters 13 and 14 of [A1](#), though likely derived from an early manuscript. The first two paragraphs derive from Chapter 12; large segments of the novel dealing with Frau Anders are deleted, so this excerpt focuses on the Jean-Jacques/Hippolyte relation; the last three pages derive from the first segment of Chapter 14, preceding the transcribed version of Father Bulgaraux’s sermon.

G24 Correspondence. *Partisan Review* 30 (Fall 1963):475–6.

Replies to Abel's K2 critique of D6. Denies reductively equating tragedy with nihilism, ponders why Brecht "must" be, if important, "a meta-dramatist," and renews her claim that Abel mistakenly equates tragedy and (individual) morality.

G25 "20th-century European Fiction: Susan Sontag's Shelf." *Book Week (New York Herald Tribune)*, 12 Jan. 1964, 6, 33.

Uses the invitation to recommend \$20 worth of paperback European fiction as occasion for distinguishing the nineteenth-century "big novel" (and its twentieth-century British and American inheritors) from the philosophical, inward-looking, and formally experimental modern European fiction. Also comments individually on most of the fourteen selections.

G26 Letters to the Editor ("Behold Goliath"). *New York Times Book Review*, 31 May 1964, 18.

Responds to Maloff's review of Alfred Chester. See K6.

G27 Correspondence ("Two Camps"). *Partisan Review* 32 (Winter 1965):157–8.

Replies to John Simon's K8 critique of B11 by urging that he has taken her "analysis" as "tribute," as if she were advocating rather than describing. Acknowledges the link "between homosexuality and Camp taste," but takes this as "part of the phenomenon, not an argument against it."

G28 "On Vietnam." Lionel Abel et al. *Partisan Review* 32 (Fall 1965): 620–56.

A number of writers respond to a *PR* editorial "On Vietnam and the Dominican Republic" (Summer 1965). Sontag (pp. 655–6) takes the second part of the editorial as voicing a consensus generally critical of U.S. foreign policy, but puzzles the first paragraph's anxiety about "an alternative policy." Urges that the "emotional" appeal of petitions (vs. truly informed analyses by "students of world affairs") speaks to the "existential" chauvinism of most Americans, who "do not believe that other countries, other ways of life, exist."

G29 "PPA's Press Conferences." *Publishers Weekly*, 28 Mar. 1966, 36–9.

Sontag is among three writers on a panel that appeared before the Publishers' Publicity Association. Her remarks (pp. 36–7), reported under the heading "The Role of the Writer as Critic," describe the writer as "the model" of the "awake" critical consciousness; Sontag urges that the Vietnam war "infects and depresses and corrupts us all"; praises William Burroughs for the "extra work" he demands of his readers.

G30 "Black and White." In *Authors Take Sides on Vietnam: Two Questions on the War in Vietnam Answered by the Authors of Several Nations*, edited by Cecil Woolf and John Bagguley, 13–51. London: Peter Owen, 1967.

Sontag (p. 46) expresses her shame at America's brutality and conceit, and agrees with Bertrand Russell that Vietnam is "an acid test" for Western intellectuals.

G30a "Susan Sontag." In *Authors Take Sides on Vietnam: Two Questions on the War in Vietnam Answered by the Authors of*

*Several Nations*, edited by Cecil Woolf and John Bagguley, 69–70. New York: Simon & Schuster, 1967.

Though the London edition of the book lists a joint copyright with Simon & Schuster, the New York edition is much abbreviated and reconfigured, ordering selections alphabetically by author rather than by thematic chapters.

G31 Lottman, Herbert R. “Cinema-Verite: Jean-Luc Godard.” *Columbia University Forum* 10.4 (Winter 1967):23–9.

Quotes Sontag on Godard at length (from G32?).

\*G32 “Godard.” *New Yorker Theater*, 19 Oct.–1 Nov. 1967.

G32 was “published in broadsheet form,” per Sontag, to accompany a Godard retrospective. Per Julia Lesage, in *Jean-Luc Godard: A Guide to References and Resources* (Boston: G.K. Hall, 1979), a similar handout was distributed at a retrospective held at the University Art Museum, Univ. of California, Berkeley. Though Prof. Lesage donated her Godard materials to the Museum of Modern Art, they could not be located. Nor could a subsequent printing of this item—as “Notes on Godard” in *Harbinger* (Apr. 1982):8–9—reported by Sontag. The passages cited in G31 may derive from G32.

G33 *The American Literary Anthology/1: The First Annual Collection of the Best from the Literary Magazines*. New York: FS&G; Rexdale, Ont.: Ambassador, 1968. 495 pp.

Sontag was among the judges (of essays and criticism, in her case) who selected “the best from the literary magazines” in compiling this anthology.

G34 Letters to the Editors of *The Times* (“Police Shooting of Oakland Negro”). James Baldwin et al. *New York Times*, 6 May 1968, 46.

Protests a police assault on officers of the Black Panther Party that resulted in the death of Bobby Hutton.

G35 Letters to the Editor of *The Times* (“Ban on Ernest Mandel”). Noam Chomsky et al. *New York Times*, 25 Oct. 1969, 32.

Protests the State Department’s refusal to grant a visa to a Marxist economist as an attack on academic freedom.

G36 Untitled excerpts. In *Recreation: Some Notes on What’s What and What You Might be Able to Do about What’s What*, edited by Marc Estrin. New York: Delta, Dell, 1971.

Quotes Sontag about the recuperability of political proposals (vs. “repudiation of cultural norms”) and on the power of “really grooving” to “unfit” people “for the American way of life.”

G37 “60 Western Intellectuals Berate Castro.” *New York Times*, 22 May 1971, 1, 8.

Includes an English text of G37a. See also G38.

G37a “Segunda carta al Comandante Fidel Castro.” Claribel Alegría et al. *Libre* (Paris) No. 1 (Sept.-Nov. 1971): 124–5.

The Spanish text of G37, which protests Cuba's "Stalinist" treatment of Heberto Padilla and other writers.

G38 "Primera carta al Comandante Fidel Castro." Valerio Adami et al. *Libre* (Paris) No. 1 (Sept.-Nov. 1971):95-6.

Appeals to Che Guevara's defense of "criticism within the revolution" in seeking reasons for the detention of Heberto Padilla. Predicts "profound repercussions" among "anti-imperialists everywhere" if Cuba is seen as repressive. (Both G37a and G38 are part of a special section of *Libre* entitled "Documentos: El caso Padilla." See pp. 95-145.)

\*G39 "American Women's Petition." *Ms.* (Spring Preview, 1972).

Sontag is one of the original fifty-three signatories who avow "I have had an abortion" in this letter.

G39a "American Women's Petition." *Ms.*, Oct. 1972, 117-20.  
A much expanded list of signatories. (This list was variously expanded and reprinted in subsequent numbers.)

G40 "Scenes from *Brother Carl*." *Partisan Review* 40 (Winter 1973): 37-51.

Comprises four segments—a "Preface" and four numbered scenes—obviously derived from an early draft of A10. Scene 15 here corresponds roughly to scene 12 of A10, though it contains more lines; its camera directions are tentative ("Perhaps") if also sometimes more detailed; lines are shifted from one character to another in the passage from G40 to A10; screen positions are also reversed. Scenes 45 and 46 here correspond in similar fashion to scene 42 of A10.

G41 "Artists on Watergate." Tom Wolfe et al. *Changes* (New York), Sept.-Oct. 1973, 22-4, 43.

Sontag appears after Tom Wolfe, before Yoko Ono, in this collection of responses to Watergate. Contends that "the most important" revelations concern Nixon's Vietnam policies, against which his domestic "dirty tricks" pale by comparison. Likens Nixon to McCarthy; both fell more for offending the political establishment than for crimes against civil rights.

G42 *Liberación femenina*. Susan Sontag et al. Mexico, D.F.: Televisa/Organización Editorial Novaro, 1975. 110pp.

Transcribes a television roundtable. Sontag avows that feminism's next phase will move beyond advocating changes in civil and economic rights to working for deeper changes in consciousness; criticizes women whose reluctance to vote for other women betrays low self-esteem; exemplifies the necessity for change by reference to her tourist visa, which lumps "housewife" in the same nonworker category as retired people, children, students, and the unemployed.

G43 "Sontag, Susan." In *World Authors 1950-1970*, edited by John Wakeman, 1348-50. New York: H.W.Wilson Co., 1975.

Half of this reference-work sketch would seem, judging by quotation marks, to be self-portrait.

G44 Letters (“Credit for Kracauer”). *New York Review of Books*, 6 Mar. 1975, 34.

Acknowledges “inadvertent plagiarism” in her B50 plot summary of *The Blue Light*.

G45 “Feminism and Fascism: An Exchange.” *New York Review of Books*, 20 Mar. 1975, 31–2.

Responds to Adrienne Rich’s K62 letter by reasserting the claim that feminists bear some responsibility for Riefenstahl’s rehabilitation and by scoring the (sometimes useful, necessary) simplemindedness that, in equating patriarchy with fascism, refuses to acknowledge that “Fascism must also be seen in the context of other—less perennial—problems” lest history lose all claim on our attentions. Urges the necessity of distinguishing among instances of patriarchy; decries the rhetoric that denies all value to hierarchy or authority; suggests that anti-intellectualism is itself “one of the roots of fascism.”

G46 “The Meaning of Vietnam.” Sheldon S. Wolin et al. *New York Review of Books*, 12 June 1975, 23–33.

Sontag ponders the perception that, while the Vietnamese “won” the war, the anti-war “we” did not, in large part because the consensus that brought the war to a close did not share the movement’s sense of injustice. Avows that many in the movement did not grasp the politics of the war, were avowedly antipolitical if not death-wish cynical or fascistic. Hopes that the 1970s might see an awakening to the difficulties of effecting “real political change.” See pp. 24–5.

G46a                      *USA: Después de Vietnam*. Trans (Span.) José María Alvarez. Barcelona: Editorial Anagrama, 1975. 73 pp.  
A paperback translation of G46.

G47 “Memories of ‘Justice.’” Jay Cocks et al. *Film Comment* 11.4 (July-Aug. 1975):16–7.

This collection of comments on Marcel Ophuls’s *The Memory of Justice* includes a brief contribution from Sontag lamenting the “outrageous” attempts to sabotage the film.

G48 “An Exchange on Leni Riefenstahl.” *New York Review of Books*, 18 Sept. 1975, 59–60.

Replies to Hinton (K63). Acknowledges, by reference to her sources, errors of fact that she effectively seconded, but urges that the primary source of misinformation is Riefenstahl, though hers is the line Hinton follows.

G49 Letters (“Vautrin’s Cigar”). *New York Review of Books*, 27 Oct. 1977, 43.

Scores Richard Ellman’s failure (see *NYR*, 4 Aug.) to credit Balzac with courage in depicting homosexuality in *Illusions perdues*; contests the implication that Proust was hostile to Wilde. See K74.

G50 “Immortal Nominations.” Rudolf Arnheim et al. *New York Times Book Review*, 3 June 1979, 12–3, 47.

Asked which post-World War II books were most likely to count among “the most important books of Western literature,” and which neglected prewar books were most likely to join them, Sontag adduces works by Beckett, Yourcenar, Mandelstam, Calvino, Genet, Gadda, Borges, Nabokov.

G51 “Susan Sontag on the Meaning of Margaret Thatcher.” *Ms.*, July 1979, 68.

Avows—in a talk to the National Women’s Political Caucus—that though the “first [female politicians] who actually get a modicum of power are likely to oppose, or at least deny, connections with feminism,” like Thatcher, “Still, just their visibility will make it more acceptable for women to succeed who *are* accountable” to women. See [K88](#).

G51a Excerpt. In *The Decade of Women: A Ms. History of the Seventies in Words and Pictures*, edited by Suzanne Levine and Harriet Lyons, 99. New York: Paragon/G.P. Putnam’s Sons, 1980.

G52 “Sontag: ‘Young People Have Less Intellectual Energy.’” *U.S. News and World Report*, 9 July 1979, 69.

Describes television as “incompatible with reading,” while writers are more sophisticated than ever. Describes herself as a rereader. Adduces the positive influence of film on writers like Dos Passos, the negative influence of urban commerce on architecture and art.

G53 Rumsey, Spencer. “Sontag Speaks!” *Berkeley Barb*, 13 Dec. 1979, 13.

Reports an informal lecture in which Sontag describes pornography as “propaganda against women” and avows that “the impulse to censor may be stronger than the sexual impulse” and “must be fought.”

\*G54 *Comme tu mi vuoi*, a cura del Centro Studi del T.S.T.Turin: Pozzo Gros Monti S.p.A. [1980?]

The program for Sontag’s production of Pirandello’s *As You Desire Me*; cited in [H91](#).

G55 “Susan Sontag.” *Chelsea* (New York) No. 39 (1980):121–37.

The journal number focuses on artists who cross media or genre boundaries. [G55](#) combines excerpts—dialogue, stills, credits, program notes—from the *Brother Carl* screenplay (scenes 12, 22, 40, and 66) and *Promised Lands*, the one a fiction, the other a documentary, to the point of creating something like a new work, which emphasizes the twisting circularity of human promise or desire.

G56 “Syberberg’s ‘Hitler.’” *New York Review of Books*, 29 May 1980, 47–9.

Replies to Stern and Sommer ([K91](#)). Suggests that Stern fails to see how Syberberg’s film is as much about film as Hitler, which amounts to ignoring its formal “envelope” for the sake of the “content” inside; sees more “one-sidedness” in the criticisms leveled at her and Syberberg than in the film, which is resolutely “ironic, learned, compassionate.”

G57 Letters (“Support for the Poles”). Edward Albee et al. *New York Times*, 29 Aug. 1980, [A18](#).

Urges the Polish government to grant “a greater degree of freedom” to workers seeking “to organize independently.”

G58 Bockris, Victor. *With William Burroughs: A Report from the Bunker*. New York: Seaver Books, 1981.

Six chapters feature Sontag: “On Writing,” “On Women,” “Burroughs in London,” “On Drugs,” “On Politics,” “With Beckett in Berlin.” Though mostly a bit player, Sontag’s discussion of her writerly motives (in “On Writing”), of 1950s cultural paranoia (in “On Politics”), and of her recollections of visiting Beckett in Berlin are substantial.

G59 “Der Autor als Komplize.” Joseph Brodsky et al. Trans. (Ger.) Walle Bengs. *Freibeuter* (Berlin) No. 8 (1981):1–14.

Reports a roundtable discussion on authors as “accomplices” of censorship. Sontag agrees that self-censorship or restraint is important (in the case of television), but disagrees that every modification of a text is censorship, any more than that informal censorship (Sartre’s refusal to criticize the Soviets) is qualitatively equivalent to enforced censorship.

G60 White, George Abbott. “Simone Weil’s Bibliography: Some Reflections on Publishing and Criticism.” In *Simone Weil: Interpretations of a Life*, edited by George Abbott White, 181–94. Amherst: Univ. of Massachusetts Press, 1981.

Reports a talk Sontag gave to a symposium on Simone Weil, where she commented on the fact that T.S.Eliot wrote a preface for the English edition of *The Need for Roots*.

G61 “Art and Intellect in America: A Symposium.” Robert Boyers et al. *Salmagundi* No. 50–51 (Fall 1980–Winter 1981):52–253.

The table of contents divides these proceedings into numbered sections, and lists participants accordingly, Sontag only in section 2, as a respondent to a paper on American painting by Ronald Paulson. In fact, she also responds to George Steiner in section 1, and to Leslie Fiedler in section 3. (Steiner responds to her response in section 8.)

(1) Praises Steiner’s willingness to provoke, his defense of “seriousness.”

(2) Takes thinking about painting via tradition as explaining the mistaken view that American painting was the only postwar painting that mattered. Urges a more pluralistic view of art generally; takes the abstraction of abstract expressionism as less American (or painterly) than modernist. Rejects “What does it mean?” questions in favor of a (more Steineresque) obsession with art (“I want to be relevant to it”). Responds to a question about photography in America by describing the American strain of romanticism (a “thinner brew” than Europe’s) as “welcoming” photography as central to modernism. Disagrees with Bloom’s literary genealogy model, especially as it applies to painting.

(3) Defends Fiedler’s defense of popular culture, though takes the success of that defense as itself, now, a problem, as if it is “difficult” art that now needs defenders.

G62 Slopen, Beverly. “Findley and the Wordsmiths... Amnesty and Excellence.” *Quille and Quire* (Toronto), Nov. 1981, 17.

Quotes Sontag on the relationship between “moral authority” and writerly “excellence.” (See [G69](#), [G72](#)).

G63 Gever, Martha. “The Neurotic Erotic: Debating Art and Pornography.” *Afterimage* 10.1–2 (Summer 1982):5.

Quotes Sontag remarking her ambivalence about porn.

G64 “On Literary Tradition: A Symposium.” Nadine Gordimer et al. *Shenandoah* 33.3 (Fall 1982):3–46.

Position papers by William Matthews and Edmund White are followed by panel responses. Sontag urges that literary tradition consists less of allusion than of forms, tones, topoi, models. Notes the American tendency to equate tradition with the past, but holds that “the world is reeking with tradition.” Comments later that America is “a kind of anthology or encyclopedia,” on the difference between the way writers and readers relate to tradition. Praises Virginia Woolf as “the greatest English Prose writer of the 20th century” and as instancing a baroque/poetic tradition of English fiction. Acknowledges her own loyalty to the speculative tradition of American literature (Emerson, Poe, Melville); observes as well the anti-intellectual “cowboy” pose of untutored originality that often characterizes American writers.

G65 Wade, Barbara. “To See Ourselves.” *Books in Canada*, Jan. 1982, 3–6.

Sontag is among writers surveyed on their knowledge of Canadian literature, about which she allows she is (in general) “woefully ignorant” (see pp. 3–4).

G66 “The Polish Crisis: Three Statements.” Stanislaw Baranczak et al. *New York Review of Books*, 21 Jan. 1982, 67.

Sontag signs the second of these “three statements.” It urges believers in democracy and freedom to “halt all transactions” with Poland until all members of Solidarity are freed.

G67 “Reply.” *Nation*, 27 Feb. 1982, 237–8.

Takes the [K109](#) response to [B67c](#)—as expressing “banal homilies or a defection to reaction”—as itself an indication of the problem addressed. Distinguishes “social democrats” from Leninists; urges that Leninist communism, hence communism per se, is “essentially despotic” and ideologically bankrupt.

G67a “Polémica sobre el socialismo real.” *Vuelta* (Mexico, D.F.) 6. 70 (Sept. 1982):48–9.

A Spanish translation of [G67](#).

G68 Letters (“Sontag in Poland”). *Encounter*, Nov. 1982, 94.

Objects to Lasky’s presumption (in the Aug. issue) that she was ever “hopeful” about Polish communism. See [K140](#).

G69 “Against Ideology.” In *The Writer and Human Rights*, edited by The Toronto Arts Group for Human Rights, 233–40. Garden City, NY: Anchor Press, Doubleday; Canada: Lester & Orpen Dennys, 1983.

Adduces Alan Sillitoe to the effect that writers should avoid explicit political commitments because “ultimately, the best propaganda is art.” In the context of

the subsequent conversation (“Drawing the Line: A Discussion”), Sontag observes that Amnesty International (to which all book proceeds are donated) defends all “prisoners of conscience,” whether they be writers or not. See [G72](#), [K99](#), [K137](#).

G70 “The City and Literature.” Elizabeth Hardwick, Susan Sontag, and Stephen Koch. In *The Vision and Reality of the American City*, edited by James Stewart Polshek, 56–73. New York: KCG Productions, 1983.

Cites Dr. Johnson to adduce the “Two ideals” mythology by which the rural as “retreat” contrasts with the city as the “capital of the imagination,” of the “interesting”; takes “anatomizing” cities as a primary literary genre, though our image of New York is more cinematic than literary. Claims that “the mythology of the city” is largely tragic, though therein lies its (largely literary, artificial) attraction.

G71 Insdorf, Annette. “The Personal Documentary.” In *Indelible Shadows: Film and the Holocaust*, 177–91, 215–6. New York: Random House; Toronto: Random House of Canada, 1983.

Quotes Gina Blumenfeld’s [E11](#) interview of Sontag.

*G71a* “The Personal Documentary.” In *Indelible Shadows: Film and the Holocaust*, 177–91, 215–6. New York: Vintage, [Random House,] 1983.

*G71b* “Le documentaire personnel.” Trans. (Fr.) Michelle Rosenbaum. In *L’Holocauste à l’écran. CinémAction* (Paris) No. 32 (May 1985):154–68.

*G71c* “The Personal Documentary.” In *Indelible Shadows: Film and the Holocaust*, 2d ed., 211–33, 263–4. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1989.

G72 “The Two Voices: A Discussion.” In *The Writer and Human Rights*, edited by The Toronto Arts Group for Human Rights, 26–32. Garden City, NY: Anchor Press/Doubleday; Canada: Lester & Orpen Dennys, 1983.

Sontag and Carolyn Forché discuss whether a writer’s “freedom” derives its moral authority from a social or an individual conscience. A question from the audience initiates a free for all (“The Grand Inquisitor: A Discussion”) in which Sontag agrees with Nadine Gordimer that writers routinely deal with ideas opposed to their own (“it’s part of the stuff and the drama of fiction”).

G73 Letters (“Cultural Colloquium in Paris: The Real Achievements”). Tom Bishop et al. *New York Times*, 27 Feb. 1983, sec. 4, 16E.

Attacks American press coverage of a French conference on “Creation and Development” (see [G76](#)). While depicted as a gathering of intellectual guns hired to blast “American cultural imperialism,” the conference was attended chiefly by French intellectuals and dealt with more general cultural problems, though “Dallas” did prove an apt trope for “cultural leveling.”

G74 Letters (“The Case of Miklos Duray”). Irving Howe, Susan Sontag, Kurt Vonnegut. *New York Review of Books*, 31 Mar. 1983, 44.

Urges the Hungarian prime minister to protest the persecution of Miklos Duray, then on trial for documenting the illtreatment of ethnic Hungarians in Czechoslovakia.

G75 “The Benefactor.” *Brown Journal of the Arts* 1.2 (1984):1–7.

Reprints Chapter 1 of *A1*.

G76 “Le mythe de la culture américaine.” In *Le Complexe du Léonard ou la Société de Création*, 103–4. Paris: Les Éditions du Nouvel Observateur, 1984.

Takes European fascination with American culture as mythical, in view of the weak state of the arts in America, where the lack of state support for corporate or performing arts (e.g., theater, cinema) means commercial considerations dominate.

G77 “Susan Sontag Introduces Joseph Brodsky.” *Envoy* (New York) No. 44 and No. 45 (1984):2–3.

Likens Brodsky to Auden, as exiles, American citizens, as poets of transformative power. Like Nabokov in prose, Brodsky sets “new standards for writing and thinking in America.”

G78 “A Tribute.” *Illuminations* (London) No. 3 (Spring 1984):6.

Hails Stephen Spender as a cherished “fellow citizen of our beleaguered supra-national republic of letters.”

G78a “A Tribute.” In “‘Illuminations’: Editing a Magazine of Contemporary Writing,” by Peter Aidan MCMillan. Ph.D. diss., Univ. of South Carolina, 1986.

G79 Letters (“The Ali Taygun Case”). Robert Brustein et al. *New York Review of Books*, 28 Mar. 1985, 44.

Protests the pretrial detention by Turkish authorities of Yale-trained theater director Ali Taygun.

G80 Letters (“The Case of Daud Haider”). Sharon Olds et al. *New York Review of Books*, 24 Oct. 1985, 57.

Urges Rajiv Gandhi to halt deportation proceedings against Bengali poet Daud Haider.

G81 “Susan Sontag on Crucial Role of Teachers of English.” *College English* 48.2 (Feb. 1986):147–9.

Connects American “inarticulateness” to “our puritan tradition.” Because Sontag had to wait until college “to be formally educated in any serious way,” she believes “teaching is the most important thing anybody can do.” Advocates a “conservative” or “elitist” view of education, memorization of poetry, the teaching of canonical writers and of “standard English” (vs. “relativism about language,” “the jargon of the education establishment,” etc.).

G82 “Uncle Wiggily’s Karma and Other Childhood Memories.” *New York Times Book Review*, 7 Dec. 1986, 46–7.

Asked which book of her childhood influenced her (among others) the most, Sontag describes herself as “a daughter of Poe.” Mentions several other childhood favorites.

G83 Untitled contribution. In *Carl Hanser, Christoph Schlotterer: Ein Gedenkbuch*, edited by Joachim Spencker, Franz-Joachim Klocl, and Michael Krüger, 152–4. Munich: Hanser, 1987.

Adduces Joyce’s “Silence, Seclusion, Cunning” formula as the antisocial creed of contemporary writers; praises Christoph Schlotterer (late publisher of Hanser’s literary division) for his personal qualities and his wise literary counsel.

G84 Letters (“Plea for a Philosopher”). Stanley Cavell et al. *New York Times*, 22 July 1987, A26.

Urges the Hungarian government to allow Janos Kis to accept a teaching position at the New School.

G85 “Susan Sontag: ‘La política de la represión amenaza la libertad y los derechos civiles.’” Angela Rodicio. *Diario 16* (Madrid), 26 Sept. 1987, 39.

Reports Sontag’s address to a conference on “The Body: Scenarios of Liberation.” While drawing on A13, Sontag also remarks on the danger of “totalizing” metaphors as they apply to AIDS, especially metaphors of war-making. See F94.

G86 Untitled. *House and Garden*, Dec. 1987, 106.

John Richardson’s “Splendid Sanctuary” (pp. 104–7, 200) describes the baroque pilgrimage church of Atotonilco in Mexico. Sontag’s sidebar urges readers to visit the shrine, partly to “use up” the “appetite for exaggeration.”

G87 Reuter, Madalynne, ed. News of the Week (“Five Authors Aid Matthiessen, See Litigation as Censorship”). *Publishers Weekly*, 18 Mar. 1988, 10–2, 14, 16.

Reports (p. 12) a friend-of-the-court brief filed by Sontag, among others.

G88 Letters (“In Korean Jails”). Susan Sontag et al. *New York Review of Books*, 24 Nov. 1988, 51.

Praises Korean president Roh Tae Woo’s efforts toward democratization while protesting the continued imprisonment of writers Kim Hyon-jang and Kim Nam-ju. Sontag signs as president of International PEN.

G89 Bockris, Victor. *The Life and Death of Andy Warhol*. New York: Bantam Books, 1989.

Quotes Sontag on Warhol’s inability to feel indignation, an emotional lack connecting his work to consumerist culture.

G90 “Donald Barthelme: 1931–1989.” *Proceedings of the American Academy and Institute of Arts and Letters 1989*, 2d ser., No. 40 (1989):79–80.

Describes Barthelme as an “exemplary citizen of the republic of letters,” an “all-American” writer “at least as much the heir of Mark Twain” as a disciple of Joyce or Borges.

G90a “In Memoriam.” *Gulf Coast* (Houston) 4.1 (1990): 172–3.  
Reprints G90, slightly revised.

G90b "In Memoriam: Donald Barthelme." *Antaeus* No. 64–65 (Spring–Autumn 1990):394–5.  
Reprints G90a.

G91 "From the Testimony of Susan Sontag before the Subcommittee on International Terrorism, Senate Foreign Relations Committee, 8 March 1989." In *The Rushdie File*, edited by Lisa Appignanesi and Sara Maitland, 166–8. London: Fourth Estate, 1989.

As president of PEN American Center, Sontag reports on George Bush's weak reaction to her letter asking for a "vigorous" response to the death threats leveled at Salman Rushdie—by contrast with the courageous actions of Rushdie and his publisher. Urges that "our integrity as a nation is as endangered by an attack on a writer as on an oil tanker."

G92 Halpern, Daniel. "Literary Influences." *Antaeus* No. 62 (Spring 1989): 234–44.

Sontag (p. 237) lists nine writers who especially influenced her.

G93 "Cosmic Carry-ons." John Richardson et al. *Interview*, Jan. 1989, 22–3.

Sontag lists items she would take if visiting another planet.

G94 "Great American Writers: Henry James." William Gass, Elizabeth Hardwick, and Susan Sontag. *PEN Newsletter*, Jan. 1989, 10–20.

Each symposiast discusses James at considerable length. Sontag defends his "garrulousness" as "essential to the substantiation of his metaphors," on the premise that "consciousness itself is his "main character." Takes this "illimitable" consciousness as philosophical confirmation or enactment of the proposition "that everything is tremendously complicated." Takes James as having an "erotic" relationship to consciousness, art, understanding, abstraction. Adduces *The Golden Bowl* as instancing the stoic or tormented consciousness, caught between rules of sexual and verbal decorum, "exquisite self-awareness," and the "truly terrible" situation thereby created, in which abstraction and circumlocution are unavoidable. Notes Jamesian word clusters: abstract nouns evoking "epistemological questions," nouns connoting the "theatrical or pictorial construction of reality," adjectives suggesting abstract scope (vs. realistic precision), equally "unconcrete" adverbs. Also specifies James's "spatial" or "architectural" metaphors wherein people "stage their lives." Insists on the "incantatory" aspect of James's prose, on its poetic, sonic qualities, whereby the abstract becomes "opulent, sumptuous," in that sense a trope of "carnal desire" even beyond anything found in Proust. Notes how Europeans, especially, don't appreciate James, for being insufficiently American; takes his propensity for complexity and pain as having a moral, pedagogical dimension. Takes his concern with eccentric perception as proto-modern, though his capaciousness allows him to satisfy even "antimodernist" appetites. Describes James as "quintessentially American in precisely the way Americans make excellent foreigners."

G95 “An Open Letter to Fidel Castro.” Nestor Almendros et al. *New York Review of Books*, 2 Feb. 1989, 41.

Sontag is among the signatories petitioning Castro to hold a plebiscite on his staying in power. (According to the 28 Dec. 1988 *Washington Post*, this letter was published as a paid advertisement “in 18 newspapers around the world.”)

G96 Letters (“State Power Is Crushing Press Freedom and Individual Rights in the UK”). Susan Sontag et al. *New Statesman and Society* (London), 24 Feb. 1989, 9.

As president of PEN American Center, Sontag is the first signatory to this letter protesting the Thatcher government’s use of the Official Secrets Act to stifle information about Britain’s national security apparatus.

G97 “Words for Salman Rushdie.” Mario Vargas Llosa et al. *New York Times Book Review*, 12 Mar. 1989, 1, 28–9.

Sontag (p. 28) urges Rushdie to exercise and to write.

G98 Fields, Howard. News of the Week (“The Rushdie Watch: Senate Unit Hears Testimony on Censorship”). *Publishers Weekly*, 24 Mar. 1989, 10–2, 14, 16.

Sontag testifies (p. 10) about the danger of self-censorship in the wake of the Rushdie affair. See G91.

G99 Letters (“South of the Border”). *New York Times*, 2 Apr. 1989, sec. 2, 3.

Alleges xenophobia in Frank Rich’s review of a Broadway show featuring black tap dancers and blues singers.

G100 “World Statement: From the International Committee for the Defense of Salman Rushdie and His Publishers (USA).” *New York Review of Books*, 13 Apr. 1989, 27.

Sontag is one of “thousands of literary figures” who signed this statement—run as a paid advertisement in periodicals world-wide—claiming involvement in the publication of *The Satanic Verses*.

G101 “Great American Writers: Emily Dickinson.” Amy Clampitt et al. *PEN Newsletter* (May 1989):3–14.

Sontag introduces and moderates a symposium discussion of Dickinson’s poetry among Clampitt, Susan Stewart, and John Hollander. Sontag briefly amplifies on Hollander’s points regarding the relation of Dickinson and George Herbert and the oddities (or absences) of Dickinson’s punctuation.

G102 Kamiya, Gary. “Susan Sontag on How We Got Here.” *Mother Jones*, May 1989, 13.

Details Sontag’s “critical stance” toward the dawning “hyper-capitalist international society.”

G103 Letters (“PEN Remains Critical of Threats to Rushdie”). Susan Sontag, Larry McMurtry, and Meredith Tax. *New York Times*, 26 May 1989, A30.

Disputes a press report implying that an International PEN Congress had muted its “criticism of Iran over the death threats against Salman Rushdie.”

G104 Reid, Calvin. “Sontag Speaks from the Heart.” *Publishers Weekly*, 30 June 1989, 44.

Reports Sontag's lecture on "Literature and Literacy" before the American Booksellers Association. She distinguishes between great literature and literacy, between desirable and empty forms of literacy. Criticizes the ABA for failing to devote a session to the plight of Salman Rushdie. See G105.

G105 Klinghoffer, David. "Random Notes." *National Review*, 14 July 1989, 44.

Reports on Sontag's ABA appearance, especially her remarks on the Rushdie affair predicting more fear and self-censorship.

G106 Weatherby, William J. *Salman Rushdie: Sentenced to Death*. New York: Carroll & Graf Publishers, 1990.

Elaborates responses to the Rushdie affair. Quotes Sontag on the dire consequences for the publishing industry, on its roots in intra-Muslim controversy, on the fragmented response of British writers, and on the ironic contrast between the event's contingency (a different book title would have yielded a different outcome) and consequences. See pp. 184–6.

G107 "On Kitsch." Saul Friedlander et al. *Salmagundi* No. 85–86 (Winter-Spring 1990):197–312.

A paper by Friedlander distinguishing between "common" and "uplifting" kitsch is followed by transcripts of nine symposia sessions; Sontag contributes to sessions 1–4 and 7.

Expresses puzzlement at Friedlander's distinctions, given the ideological complexity of text/context relations; adduces the overlap of aesthetic and political criteria, of which kitsch art (though not Syberberg) is a notable instance; argues that pop culture can be "disabling," imagines life without kitsch; ponders its historicity, its application to music, how it can be (per Hermann Broch) both "good" and "evil," the relation between "sentiment" and kitsch, nationalism and kitsch, vulgarity and kitsch; adduces the difference of television, the variability of its reception and audiences.

G108 Letters ("Help Salman Rushdie!") Tariq Ali et al. *New York Review of Books*, 12 Apr. 1990, 52.

Renews the plea of G100 advocating freedom of expression and repudiating the death threat against Salman Rushdie; Sontag is one of the many representative signatories.

G109 Letters ("Writers in Prison"). Edward Albee et al. *New York Review of Books*, 8 Nov. 1990, 61.

A letter on behalf of PEN American Center urging readers to protest the imprisonment of writers by Sudanese authorities.

G110 "Sju intellektuella svarar på fyra frågor om kriget vid gulfen." *Expressen* (Stockholm), 15 Dec. 1990, 4–5.

Sontag responds briefly (p. 5) to a questionnaire regarding the Gulf War, to the effect that the pro-democracy rhetoric of its advocates masks a desire for the exercise of power. Notes the appeal of Islam, as antimodernism; takes the environment as the only defensible universal.

G111 Bernstein, Carl. "The Leisure Empire." *Time*, 24 Dec. 1990, 56–9.

Adduces Sontag's denial "that the vitality of European culture will be extinguished by America's onslaught"—on the grounds that Europeans have "an almost colonialist attitude to ward" America as "a wonderfully advanced Third World country."

G112 "W." In *Hockney's Alphabet*, drawings by David Hockney, edited by Stephen Spender. London: Faber and Faber, 1991.

Sontag's contribution to this AIDS Crisis Trust fundraiser puns (darkly) on "weather" words, used as a means of "avoiding the not supposed to be mentioned," or as a light or "white topic" (whether?), a matter of moments succeeding one another, of being and beings coexisting, of walls coming down, of moving (à la Emerson) from mood to mood to now. (Deluxe and special editions of this volume were distributed by Bertram Rota [Publishing] Ltd.)

G112a "W." In *Hockney's Alphabet*, drawings by David Hockney, edited by Stephen Spender, 77–9. New York: Random House, 1991.

G113 Letters ("War Covers Crackdown on Palestinians"). E.L. Doctorow et al. *New York Times*, 18 Feb. 1991, sec. 1, 22.

A letter protesting Israeli (and British) efforts to silence Palestinian intellectuals.

G114 "Alice in Bed." *Scriptsi* (Melbourne) 7.2 (Oct. 1991):1–8.

Though the journal's contents page lists (somewhat inaccurately) "Introduction to Alice in Bed" and "Alice in Bed" separately, by genre, the two excerpts from [A25b](#) are printed back to back, as (differently) subtitled entries under a single main title. "Introduction" is annotated at [A25](#) as "Einführung." "Scene 6" is also annotated at [A25](#) as "6. Szene."

G114a "On *Alice in Bed*." *Common Knowledge* 2.1 (Spring 1993):12–4.

Like [G114](#), the *Alice in Bed* excerpts listed here and at [G114b](#) are announced separately, by genre, on the contents page. This version of "A Note on the Play" is identical to the [A25b](#) version except for the headnote, which provides a more extensive publication and production history.

G114b "The Rome Monologue' from *Alice in Bed*." *Common Knowledge* 2.1 (Spring 1993):9–11.

This version of "Scene 6" of [A25b](#) is subtitled "Scene Six" and carries Time and Place designators. It corresponds to the [G114](#) text rather than the [A25b](#) version of the scene.

G114c "Scenes from a New Play: *Alice in Bed*." *New Yorker*, 31 May 1993, 142–9.

Three portions of A25b appear here under a single title. Matter corresponding to “A Note on the Play” (minus any headnote) appears first, followed by a cast list and Time and Place designators; language corresponding to “Scene 5” and “Scene 6” of A25b then follows without any subheadings.

G115 Untitled excerpt from *The Volcano Lover*. Berkeley, CA: Black Oak Books/Okeanos Press, 1992. 1 broadside.

Reprints the last three paragraphs of A28 as souvenir of a Sontag reading.

G116 “Common Historical Roots.” Susan Sontag et al. *Partisan Review* 59 (Fall 1992):559–83.

Annotated at E34, though the print version is considerably revised in the editing and includes some new matter.

G117 “The Literary Impact of the American and French Revolution.” Susan Sontag et al. *Partisan Review* 59 (Fall 1992):611–38.

Annotated at E35, considerably revised (per G116).

G118 “Introduction by the Author.” *Publishers Weekly*, 30 Mar. 1992, 21–6.

Discusses (pp. 25–6) the inspiration and composition of A28.

G119 “See Naples and Gape.” *New York Times Book Review*, 9 Aug. 1992, 26.

Excerpts passages from A28, Part 1, Chapter 2.

G120 “Southern Comforts.” *Entertainment Weekly*, 21 Aug. 1992, 52.

Excerpts two paragraphs from A28, Part 2, Chapter 5.

G121 “From *The Volcano Lover*.” [Paradise Valley, AZ:] Mummy Mountain Press, Nov. 1992. 1 broadside.

Reprints a fragment on collections and collecting from A28, Part 1, Chapter 2—in a Sontag autographed gift edition for the Arizona State University Honors College.

G122 “From *The Volcano Lover: A Romance*” *Scripta* (Melbourne) 8.2 (Dec. 1992):7–34.

Excerpts, per subheadings, “Part One, Chapter Six” and “Part Two, Chapter Two” of A28, though several pages of the former were inadvertently omitted. See G125.

G123 “Spring in Sarajevo/Proljeće u Sarajevu.” Trans. Spomenka Beus. *100 & I Noc* (Sarajevo) 1 (1993):[083?].

A parable of double vision, in several dimensions: linguistically, an English text facing a Serbo-Croatian text; spatially, Sarajevans describing their war-trashed city to a visitor, followed by the visitor explaining Sarajevo to self-obsessed friends “back home”; rhetorically, the narrative voice switching from “plaintive” accusation to “sober” declaration; temporally, the perspective shifting from an anxious now (“I’m going back this summer”) to a past-haunted then (“The twenty-first century has begun in Sarajevo, too”).

G124 “Auf dem Vulkan: Zwei Abschnitte aus dem Roman: ‘*Der Liebhaber des Vulkans*.’” Trans. (Ger.) Isabell Lorenz. *Sprache im technischen Zeitalter* (Berlin) No. 125 (Mar. 1993):53–61.

Excerpts the second segment of Part 1, Chapter 2, and the third segment of Part 2, Chapter 6 of [A28d](#).

G125 “From *The Volcano Lover, Chapter Six*.” *Scriptsi* 8.3 (Apr. 1993): 163–7.

Reprints the first part of [G122](#), plus the material dropped from that excerpt.

G126 “Writing *The Volcano Lover*.” *Scriptsi* 8.3 (Apr. 1993):158–61.

Annotated at [A28a](#) as “A Special Message for the First Edition from Susan Sontag.”

*G126a* “Auszug aus den Anmerkungen zu meinem Roman ‘*Der Liebhaber des Vulkans*.’” Trans. (Ger.) Isabell Lorenz. *Sprache im technischen Zeitalter* (Berlin) No. 125 (Mar. 1993): 62–3.

Abridges [G126](#) by half.

# PART TWO

## Secondary Works

## SECTION H

### Book Chapters, Essays, and Review Articles

H1 Koch, Stephen. "Imagination in the Abstract." *Antioch Review* 24 (Summer 1964):253–63.

Describes [A1](#) and Pynchon's *V.* as post-Joycean instances of the "comic novel tradition" in order to measure the loss of the "experiential values" upon which Joycean irony depends. Takes Hippolyte's project (conforming his conscious life to his dream life) and character ("an animated page of ironic philosophy") as instancing "pure absurdity," in that he's "been mad all along." [A1](#) thus fails to "touch earth," to evoke context.

H2 Boyers, Robert. "On Susan Sontag and the New Sensibility." *Salmagundi* 1.3 (1966):27–38.

Agrees with Sontag that "our sensibilities are for the most part warped," hence that we should "prostrate ourselves before the bizarre, the cruel, the ugly, the boring." But then denies the premise, in discussing John Hawkes's novel *Second Skin*, by reference to Leslie Fiedler's criticism of "the submission to reveries of violence." In depicting violence while ostensibly transcending it, Hawkes tries to "have things both ways," as if Hawkes had been (mis)reading Sontag.

H3 McCormack, Robert. "Interpretations." *Tamarack Review* (Toronto) No. 40 (Summer 1966):67–73.

Scores Sontag's [A2](#) habits of overgeneralizing from particulars, as if to turn a sensibility into an aesthetic, and undergeneralizing from critical principles, as if intellectual "fashion" were knowledge or principle enough. Praises Sontag as a "formidable" critic while attacking her course-grained use of the "form/ content" antinomy and her curiously limited sense of "interpretation," as being a matter entirely of "exegesis."

H4 Koch, Stephen. "On Susan Sontag." *TriQuarterly* No. 7 (Fall 1966):152–60.

Comprises two segments. (1) Defends Sontag's [A2](#) "estheticism" as "disguised polemics on the subject of human liberty." Praises her attack on the "parochialism" that opposes taste to thought and her use of "the phenomenological critique" to connect eros and liberty. Takes this as a rejection of the "systematic" (essentialist) aesthetics on view in the *au courant* if "uneasy conjunction" of psychoanalysis, left-wing moralism, and rhetorical analysis. (2)

Analyzes a “dislocation of sympathies” on view in A2 as between the “psychological urgency” of the Sartrean sensibility and the spirit of cold “aloofness” evinced in the “geometric” sensibility of Lévi-Strauss and Robbe-Grillet. Adduces her analysis of suffering and love in the work of Cesare Pavese, which would seem “to retrench the romantic myth” of the opposition of mind and body. Takes Sontag, rather, as trying to recover “that sensory identification with others and the world that lies at the heart of the romantic metaphor.” Finds “One Culture and the New Sensibility” unconvincing as regards the avowed hope that all sensibilities, even those defined as and by “refusal,” can be assimilated to “pleasure,” education, or “assent.”

H5 Mazzocco, Robert. “Swingtime.” *New York Review of Books*, 9 June 1966, 22–5.

Observes the “contemporary” excessiveness of Sontag’s subjects and models in A2, and especially of her guiding claim on behalf of a “descriptive, rather than prescriptive” aesthetic. That this is “not always illuminating” is attributable to Sontag’s “dialectical constructions” in which form and meaning are (unhelpfully) “subjected to around-the-clock alterations.” Scores Sontag for a muddled historical sense and suggests that her “attempt at phenomenological neutralism” (contra Freudian interpretation) yields “a kind of reverse-psychology” of questionable value. Praises “Spiritual Style in the Films of Robert Bresson” for evoking the criticism of Roland Barthes; criticizes “Notes on ‘Camp’” (via Nietzsche) for its failure to consider “the motivations of the camp personality” in the sad or desperate realization that “everyday experience is no longer ‘to be believed.’”

H6 Velde, Paul. “Polymorphous on Sunday: The Sontag Sensibility.” *Commonweal* 24 June 1966, 390–2.

Describes Sontag as a “liaison critic” who moves between “the new art world and the intellectual community at large” on behalf of a “new sensibility.” Characterizes her writing by reference to two traits: “the civilized urbane” (“a well-endowed ‘normal’ sensibility”) and “the novel extreme.” Takes her emphasis of the perverse or fanciful as a (happily) regressive return of the repressed, of the sensual, in art, though it is (unhappily) literary critics—Sontag among them—who are tasked to explain it. Ponders how the aesthetic function of the will can become social, become art, if sheer fantasy, according to Trilling, “has no social value.”

H7 Ellmann, Mary. “The Sensational Susan Sontag.” *Atlantic*, Sept. 1966, 59–63.

Relates Sontag’s interest in “sensation” or “sensibility” to the way her audience has “made her sensational” almost despite her polemical, school-teacherly persona. Takes Sontag’s “pleasure in ideas and [her] displeasure in all that she considers artistic convention” as leading to her “aesthetic division between thought and sensation.” In seeking or advocating a sensibility devoted to coolness, catholicity, rapidity, impermanence, unity, and wordlessness, Sontag “seems not so much to fear the inadequacy of language as a medium of art as to

assume it.” Yet as a critic or writer, she is clearly “entrapped” in language, hence her neglect of such wordless forms as sculpture, painting, and music. She is at her critical best in writing about contemporary theater, where words are palpable and need only evoke “the illusion of sense.” Though she uses aphorisms and fragments dramatically, à la McLuhan, her A2 reliance on smartness and clichés renders them “not aphoristic enough.” Takes *The Benefactor*, in its “frugality” and “constriction,” as best accommodating Sontag’s writing to “the new sensibility.”

H8 Green, Martin. “A New Sensibility?” *Cambridge Quarterly* 2 (Winter 1966–67):55–65.

Compares Rieff’s *The Triumph of the Therapeutic* and A2 as avatars of the “decadent” anti-high-culture post-Freudian sensibility. Takes “Notes on ‘Camp’” as defining Sontag’s relation to “high culture” and its “modernist” successors. Though both Rieff and Sontag write in epigrams and fragments, “her epigrams are better.” Downgrades Sontag’s abilities as “theorist” or “close critic”; praises her capacity to respond to particular works via generalizations, saying aloud what less “impressive” critics would leave unspoken.

H9 Kauffmann, Stanley. “Interpreting Miss Sontag.” *New Republic*, 2 Sept. 1967, 24, 45–6.

Describes A1 and A3 as products of “literary and philosophical cultivation, not of art.” But the “incidental” virtues of the former are obviated in *Death Kit* by Sontag’s attempts “to sear in and out of various levels of consciousness and reality” without the requisite “literary talent.” Ironically, the book’s Freudian temptation “to solve its equations”—“a list of rib-nudging clues”—calls for exactly the kind of allegorical interpretation decried in “Against Interpretation.”

H10 Solotaroff, Theodore. “Death in Life.” *Commentary*, Nov. 1967, 87–9.

Sees A3 as “analytic, technique-ridden,” yet “a work of art nonetheless.” Though the book deflects experience by requiring interpretation, interpretation is also required by its initial reception, as being obsessively obscure. Takes the ostensible “events” of A3—Diddy’s murder of Incardona, etc.—as the “Death Kit” the suicidal Diddy carries with him into eternity, expressing “in a purer and more potent form” the “death-in-life” of his former existence; takes Incardona as the “dreary workman” self he kills, Hester as the self who (blindly) desires rebirth. Credits the “intense formalism” of the novel to the Freudian sense in which “the unconscious is an artist—an endlessly cunning metaphysical poet” and to Sontag’s admiration for “the mixture of intimacy and detachment” on view in Resnais, Godard, and Bresson.

H10a “Interpreting Susan Sontag.” In *The Red Hot Vacuum, and Other Pieces of Writing of the Sixties*, 261–8. New York: Atheneum, 1970.

H10b Excerpts. In *Contemporary Literary Criticism*, Vol. 1, edited by Carolyn Riley, 322. Detroit: Gale Research, 1973.

H11 Scott, Nathan A., Jr. Introduction to *Craters of the Spirit: Studies in the Modern Novel*, 11–23. Washington: Corpus Books, 1968.

Admires Sontag's advocacy of the "tradition of the new," defined in A2 as experiencing the sensory "form or style of knowing something," while asserting "that any attempt to treat [content] as irrelevant to aesthetic appreciation must be simply absurd" on the grounds that literature's "medium is language" and its "material is the stuff of human experience."

H12 Holbrook, David. "What New Sensibility?" *Cambridge Quarterly* 3 (Spring 1968):153–63.

Pictures Martin Green (H8) as sharing, with Freud, Sontag, et al., a view of "the human predicament" as an "unceasing warfare between the flesh and the spirit." Counters, by reference to Klein, Winnicott, etc., that existentialism is symptomatic of an "Ego-weakness" characteristic of schizophrenia, a lack of that "being" normally derived from the *shared* schizophrenia of mother and child, a lack subsequently made good by a "pseudo male doing" that experiences the urge to live as hate. "We can therefore conclude...that what Susan Sontag offers is *a false way of feeling strength of identity through cultural symbolism of hate*" as if "human striving in pain and weakness, to find oneself in complex with 'finding the object', *is no longer necessary.*"

H13 Bayley, John. "Against a New Formalism." *Critical Quarterly* 10 (Spring-Summer 1968):60–71.

Comprises six segments. (1) Contrasts "dumb" artists who produce "autonomous" artworks and "communicating" (mimetic) artists. (2) Takes claims to link imitation and autonomy as (weak) attempts to aestheticize (hence manage) experience. (3) Cites Sontag on Genet (in B17) as instancing a "new" formalism that "has compressed the aesthetic object more tightly and isolated it more consciously." (4) Takes the tension between ontology and significance as defining the (novelistic) "reality" or subject matter that formalism seeks to deny. (5) Claims that theories of aesthetic autonomy and "interestingness" arise only when the *authority* of an art form is in question; takes Sontag's (Arnoldian) defense of Genet and of the new novel as exemplary instances. (6) In allowing criticism to substitute (passive) "intimacy" for (active) "communication," formalism seeks to "nullify" the self/other tension between reader and text that is the "supreme virtue and value" of "the greatest kind" of artwork.

H13a "Against a New Formalism." In *The Word in the Desert: The Critical Quarterly Tenth Anniversary Number*, edited by C.B.Cox and A.E.Dyson, 60–71. London: Oxford Univ. Press, 1968.

H14 Tanner, Tony. "Space Odyssey." *Partisan Review* 35 (Summer 1968):446–51.

Emphasizes *Death Kit's* interiority, its images of enclosure (tunnels, a seashell, the self), its echoes of Beckett, Canetti, and A1; takes A1 and A3 as

parables of disburdenment. Observes the “vision” theme in [A3](#) while declaring the book “viewless,” a viewlessness justified by its inside-out narration. Observes the dramatically Jamesian aspect of Sontag’s formalism, while claiming that [A3](#)’s “revulsion against language” robs it of (verbal) “magic.”

*H14a* “Interior Spaciousness—Car, Bell Jar, Tunnel and House.” In *City of Words: American Fiction 1950–1970*, 260–72, 449. London: Jonathan Cape, 1971.

Explores “inner spaciousness” in Walker Percy, Sylvia Plath, Sontag, and William Gass; incorporates most of [H14](#). (A Jonathan Cape Paperback edition was published in 1976.)

*H14b* “Interior Spaciousness—Car, Bell Jar, Tunnel and House.” In *City of Words: American Fiction 1950–1970*, 260–72, 449. New York: Harper & Row, 1971.

*H14c* Excerpts. In *Contemporary Literary Criticism*, Vol. 1, edited by Carolyn Riley, 322. Detroit: Gale Research, 1973.

*H14d* “Space Odyssey.” In *Twentieth-Century American Literature*, Vol. 6, The Chelsea House Library of Literary Criticism, edited by Harold Bloom, 3726–8. New York, 1987.

*H15* Brodin, Pierre. “Susan Sontag.” *Liberté* (Montreal) 10.2 (Mar.–Apr. 1968): 42–8.

Takes Sontag as a “modern” writer whose reputation will outlive public infatuations with camp and pop. Discusses [A1](#) and [A3](#) as raising questions of realism and narration; both novels are seen as exemplifying Sontag’s critical assumptions, especially as to the link between intellect and sensibility.

*H15a* “Susan Sontag.” In *Vint-cinq américains: Littérature et littérateurs américains des années 1960*, 212–9. Paris: Nouvelles Editions Debresse, 1969.

Reprints [H15](#). A new conclusion emphasizes Sontag’s lack of humor, her concern for “boredom” as technique.

*H16* Phillips, William. “Radical Styles.” *Partisan Review* 36 (Summer 1969): 388–400.

Takes Sontag as “both an exponent and a victim of the new polarization.” Takes [A5](#) as continuing her analysis of the aesthetic and moral “links between the past and the present,” though she “bypasses contemporary American criticism” even while using “accepted” critical terms. Praises “The Aesthetics of Silence” as suggesting “a way out of the predicament of elitism” via Surrealism and Dada (and film), where it is “possible to be at the same time popular and unconventional.” Allows the intractability of the form/content distinction while recommending Sontag’s view of “style” as “the shape and meaning” of content.

Praises the “self-examination” of “Trip to Hanoi” while using its lack of a “new or larger political perspective” as occasion for speculating on various dilemmas and questions facing the Left.

*H16a* Excerpts. In *Contemporary Literary Criticism*, Vol. 31, edited by Jean C. Stine and Daniel G. Marowski, 409–11. Detroit: Gale Research, 1985.

H17 Young, Vernon. “Socialist Camp: A Style of Radical Wistfulness.” *Hudson Review* 22 (Autumn 1969):513–20.

Describes Sontag as having “many of the secondary attributes of a professional revolutionary” (e.g., “a private thirst to be devoured by something bigger... than herself”) while lacking “the primary one: she has no passion, only resentment.” Though advocating multiplicity, “she wants others to extend *their* latitude,” especially on matters sexual. Takes Sontag’s preference for Cage over Cioran as evincing a desire for “a world without sin.” Decries the historical (and sexual) “gullibility” of “Trip to Hanoi” and the “total absence of *life*” from *Duet for Cannibals*.

*H17a* Excerpts. In *Contemporary Literary Criticism*, Vol. 31, edited by Jean C. Stine and Daniel G. Marowski, 408–9. Detroit: Gale Research, 1985.

H18 Fox, Hugh. “The Goddess of the New Sensibility: Susan Sontag.” *Trace* (London) No. 70 (May 1969):13–20.

Takes “Notes on ‘Camp’” as the Sontag “key” because its “insider” praise of the trendy typifies her criticism and her fiction alike. Though [A1](#) and *Death Kit* are both faulted—the former for its stylistic reticence despite Sontag’s praise of experimentalism, the latter for the “add on” hints of surrealism, which mar an otherwise successful “Updikean novel”—it is the earlier and “campier” (hence less commercial) of the two novels that finally earns the more sustained praise.

H19 Gilman, Richard. “Susan Sontag and the Question of the New.” *New Republic*, 3 May 1969, 23–6, 28.

Describes Sontag as a “speculative” critic in the French tradition. Contrasts her interest in artworks as “sensuous actualities” to knowledge-driven “traditions of exegesis.” Defends Sontag’s aesthetic preferences against charges of immorality, while acknowledging both “the failure and the fruitfulness” of her efforts to advocate the “spontaneous, concrete, [and] sensual.” Praises [B30](#) for attacking the equation of “fiction” with “realism” though at the risk of confusing pornography and “writing with a sexual theme.” Takes [B30](#) and “Notes on ‘Camp’” as evincing an “unavowed” desire for a different culture, which would allow her to be a different person.

- H19a "Susan Sontag and the Question of the New." In *The Confusion of Realms*, 29–41. New York: Random House; Toronto: Random House of Canada, 1969.
- H19b "Susan Sontag and the Question of the New." In *The Confusion of Realms*, 29–41. London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1970.
- H19c Excerpts. In *Contemporary Literary Criticism*, Vol. 31, edited by Jean C. Stine and Daniel G. Marowski, 406–8. Detroit: Gale Research, 1985.
- H19d Excerpts. In *Modern American Literature*, 4th ed., Vol. 5, A Library of Literary Criticism, edited by Paul Schlueter and June Schlueter, 447–8. New York: Frederick Ungar Publishing, 1985.

H20 Adania, Alf. "Susan Sontag există!" *Contemporanul* (Bucharest) No. 26 (June 1969):9.

Praises the cultural and political avant-gardism of Sontag's 1960s fiction and criticism; concludes, contra John Earth (K9), that "Susan Sontag does exist."

H21 Fox, Hugo. "Susan Sontag y la nueva sensibilidad." *Revista nacional de cultura* (Caracas) No. 189 (July–Sept. 1969):52–6.

Takes Sontag as "the messiah of the new sensibility" in her A2 praise of form. Describes the Godardian cinema and the French new novel as exemplifying this "geometric" formalist sensibility; even "ideas" are seen as formal features. Takes "Notes on 'Camp'" (contra Mailer's analysis of "Hip") as exemplifying Sontag's aesthetic likes and dislikes, hence as "la norteamericanización de *l'esprit géométrique*."

H22 Goodheart, Eugene. "The 'Radicalism' of Susan Sontag." *Mid-stream* 15. 10 (Dec. 1969):70–7.

Takes Sontag's aesthetic as formalist in emphasizing style, though antiformalist in refusing to distinguish art and morality. Defines her "radicalism" by reference to "The Pornographic Imagination," which exemplifies the "sensuous" if also "morbid" qualities otherwise lacking in contemporary culture. Wonders, in view of Sontag's devotion to modernism and technology, if her tastes are genuinely "radical" or have changed significantly since A2. Observes the "schizophrenia" of Sontag's "Trip to Hanoi" attempt to align the aesthetic and political, as if there were "an ineluctable opposition between 'aesthetic radicalism' and 'radical political convictions.'" Takes Sontag's interest in "sensibility" rather than "ideas" as evincing a weak understanding of criticism.

H22a "The 'Radicalism' of Susan Sontag." In *Pieces of Resistance*, 46–55. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1987.

H23 Hashiguchi, Minoru. "Susan Sontag: Atarashii jidai no zenei." *Eigo seinen: The Rising Generation* (Tokyo) 115 (1 Dec. 1969): 760–1.

Contrasts Sontag's "new age" sensibility with that of a meaning-centered New Criticism and by reference to Norman Podhoretz. Contra New Criticism, Sontag urges "transparency" over "explanation." Contra Podhoretz, she is doubly alienated, from Jewish culture *and* American culture; her culture is "Western" in a specifically modern if also orthodox sense.

H24 Mohrt, Michel. "Rêve et réalité chez Susan Sontag." In *L'Air du large: Essais sur le roman étranger*, 284–8. [Paris:] Gallimard, 1970.

Emphasizes the "strangeness" of [A1](#), its male narrator, its implicitly French setting, its bizarre dreams and characters, etc. Observes the "oneiric" aspect of the erotic relations of Frau Anders and Hippolyte; the "onanistic" and unsatisfying excess of events that never yield to a reality, evincing a sickness of self-love, a novelistic "purity" reminiscent of Borges.

H25 Bond, Kirk. "Duet for Cannibals." *Film Comment* 6.2 (Summer 1970):44–7.

Praises [E2](#) as "one of the most important films of our time." Compares *Duet* to Nemeč's *A Report on the Party* in its "Olympian" overtones, which lend the film its tentative, symbolic, almost folkloric hints toward meaning.

H26 Bogdan, Mihai. "Cu Suzan Sontag: Pentru un stil radical." *Romania literară* (Bucharest) 4.52 (Dec. 1971):13.

Surveys Sontag's novels and criticism through [A5](#).

H27 Bart, István. Afterword to *A pusztulás képei*, edited by Levante Ostovits, 300–8. Budapest: Európa Könyvkiadó, 1972. See [A8](#).

Describes Sontag's career and background; discusses "Against Interpretation" (*not* included in [A8](#)) as urging a phenomenalist aesthetic, as silencing interpretation, as advancing film and theater as exemplary modern genres. Though she appeals to American radicals, her "spiritual home" is Europe.

H28 Zemlyanova, L. "'Estetika molchaniya' i krizis antiiskusstva v SSHA." In *Neoavantgardistskie techeniya v zarubezhnoi literature 1950–60 g.g.*, edited by A.L.Dimshets, R.M.Samarin, and J.E.Elsberg, 33–157. Moscow: Hudozhestvennaya Literatura, 1972.

Elaborates, chiefly in segment 5 ("Aesthetics of 'New Left Radicalism' and Its Patrons") of this ten-segment essay, Sontag's contribution to the theory and practice of "anti-art." Compares her to Marcuse and Mailer, both of whom see sexual liberation as the heart of a "new sensibility." Takes Sontag's attack on content and interpretation in [A2](#) as inspiring "hipsterist elements in the leftist movement"; her calls for eroticism and silence, if apparently apolitical, are really "infradidactical," a mode of "shock therapy" that (in her novels) calls "the human being back to a reptile state."

H29 Marx, Leo. "Susan Sontag's 'New Left' Pastoral: Notes on Revolutionary Pastoralism in America." *TriQuarterly* No. 23–24 (Winter-Spring 1972):552–75.

Comprises five segments. (1) Notes the implicit antithesis (as between withdrawal and commitment) in accepted concepts of pastoralism and

revolution. Takes A4 as seeking “to resolve the conflict between aesthetic and political motives.” (2) Takes A4’s three-part structure as determined by “two sharp turns of feeling,” the first Sontag’s shift from skeptical journal entries to essayistic encomiums on “the moral beauty of the Vietnamese,” the second Sontag’s skeptical confrontation with the “pastoralism” of her own part-two account. (3) Describes a three-stage model of an American pastoral fable in which the withdrawal to nature results in a protagonist’s “chastening, even frightening encounter with the idealized or natural other” and a subsequent (if also equivocal, aesthetic) “return” to society. (4) Takes A4 as enacting this three-part pastoral fable in considerable detail, rendering all the more striking the fact, given Sontag’s negative take on pastoralism in “The Pornographic Imagination,” that she *continues* to idealize the Vietnamese even *after* the voice of her own skepticism “interrupts” her pastoral idyll. (5) Considers the “lucid” ironies of the “revolutionary pastoral” conclusion of A4 (e.g., the ill fit of Vietnamese models and American radicals or sophisticates) while finally avowing admiration of Sontag’s capacity “to move beyond the limits we habitually set on our trust in human motives,” thus providing us with a practical “model for the transformation of human nature.”

- H29a “Susan Sontag’s ‘New Left’ Pastoral: Notes on Revolutionary Pastoralism in America.” In *Literature in Revolution*, edited by George Abbott White and Charles Newman, 552–75. New York: Holt, Rinehart & Winston, 1972.
- H29b “Susan Sontag’s ‘New Left’ Pastoral: Notes on Revolutionary Pastoralism in America.” In *The Pilot and the Passenger: Essays on Literature, Technology, and Culture in the United States*, 291–314. New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 1988.

H30 Geltman, Max. “Susan Sontag: Mistress of the Via Negativa (A Study in Self-Laceration).” *Ideas* (Long Island City) 4 (1973): 49–53.

Portrays Sontag as “a very distraught woman who often winds up contradicting herself.” Proceeds more or less chapter-by-chapter through A2 and A5 for the purpose of demonstrating that “when she seems to be most wise, chances are she is being mostly silly.” Describes her analysis of Simone Weil as “litcamp,” largely for missing the self-hatred at work in Weil’s acceptance “of the theology of her persecutors,” and concludes by discussing “The Pornographic Imagination” as evidence that, along with her taste for self-hatred, as evidenced in her analysis of the Vietnamese in “Trip to Hanoi,” Sontag “also wants to be violated.”

H31 Kazin, Alfred. “Cassandras: Porter to Oates.” In *Bright Book of Life: American Novelists and Storytellers from Hemingway to Mailer*, 163–205. Boston: Little, Brown & Co.; Toronto: Little, Brown & Co. (Canada), 1973.

Defines latter-day “woman’s fiction” not as “writing by women” but as writing that evinces “inordinate defensiveness against a society conceived as the special enemy of the sensitive.” Takes [A1](#) and [A3](#) as extreme instances of the “detached consciousness” where “the idea of alternatives in every possible situation always replaces the bread of life.” Professes respect for Sontag’s philosophical experiments in self-transcendence through “as if narrative, in which the narrators are themselves adepts of self-destruction.

*H31a* “Cassandras: Porter to Oates.” In *Bright Book of Life: American Novelists and Storytellers from Hemingway to Mailer*, 163–205. New York: Delta, Dell, 1974.

*H31b* “Cassandras: Porter to Oates.” In *Bright Book of Life: American Novelists and Storytellers from Hemingway to Mailer*, 163–205. Notre Dame: Univ. of Notre Dame Press, 1980.

*H31c* Excerpts. In *Contemporary Literary Criticism*, Vol. 13, edited by Dedria Bryfonski, 515. Detroit: Gale Research, 1980.

*H32* Mellen, Joan. “Bourgeois Women: A Disturbance in Mirrors.” In *Women and Their Sexuality in the New Film*, 15–54. New York: Horizon Press, 1973.

Critiques the new cinema for negative depictions of “liberated” women that only “reinforce the old ways.” Reads *Duet for Cannibals* as a “parable” of “empty obsession” in which women are “pale reflections of men.” (See pp. 38–41.)

*H32a* “Bourgeois Women: A Disturbance in Mirrors.” In *Women and Their Sexuality in the New Film*, 15–54. London: Davis-Poynter, 1974.

*H32b* “Bourgeois Women: A Disturbance in Mirrors.” In *Women and Their Sexuality in the New Film*, 15–52. New York: Laurel Edition, Dell, 1975.

*H33* Nelson, Gary. Introduction to *The Incarnate Word: Literature as Verbal Space*, 3–21. Urbana: Univ. of Illinois Press, 1973.

Comprises three segments: (1) *Literature and criticism*. Ponders how the temporality of reading is spatialized in and by the reader—so as to obliterate time, hence language and selfhood. (2) *Reading Borges: the metaphysics of form*. Describes how Borges both invites and undoes our complicity in language, as if becoming a work of art were both our fear and our self-obliterating desire. (3) *The protagonist’s body: Death Kit as a model of enclosed space*. Describes [A3](#) as literalizing the Borgean obliteration by which the temporality of language congeals into “an infinite chambered nautilus” of form.

H34 Rudman, Mark. "On Sontag." In *Modern Occasions 2: New Fiction, Criticism, Poetry*, edited by Philip Rahv, 228–41. Port Washington, NY: Kennikat Press, 1974.

Describes the trajectory of Sontag's career by reference (chiefly) to her treatment of film. Though her remarks on the "temptation to interpret *Marienbad*" evince a tendency toward reductionism, film itself, its camera a "surrogate phenomenologist," "counteracts her formalizing tendencies." Critiques Sontag's B34 essay on Godard for "her unwillingness to let him have *convictions*" as well as her eagerness to attribute his qualities "to the organizing intelligence" rather than to "pain" and a desire to escape the very organization he depicts. Scores her devotion to destruction, to the new, to the "radical," as bespeaking "her dread of the ordinary."

H35 Rubin, Louis D., Jr. "Encaustics: Susan Sontag and the Camp Followers." *Sewanee Review* 82 (Summer 1974):503–10.

Takes A2 as "the manifesto for the whole Camp movement" to the extent that Sontag's anti-hermeneutic B15 credo "reduces itself down to this: don't think about what you feel." Cites her expansive B11 concept of "taste" (visual, emotional, moral, intellectual) as evidence she "is not really an exponent of pure feeling in the arts," to the extent that, if taste has "something like a logic," then it is amenable to "objective" discussion, to interpretation.

H35a Excerpts. In *Contemporary Literary Criticism*, Vol. 10, edited by Dedria Bryfonski, 484. Detroit: Gale Research, 1979.

H36 Asahina, Robert J. "The Pursuit of the New... And the Retreat into Nihilism." *Art International* 18.9 (15 Nov. 1974):63–4, 69.

Takes "Pursuit of the New" as a "Retreat into Nihilism" in that the criterion of novelty entails "the denial of aesthetic evaluation." Takes Nietzsche's transformation of fact into value as underpinning Sontag's "eschatology of immanence"; takes "The Aesthetics of Silence" as similarly turning a problem (the impossibility of evaluation) into its own solution, though a longing for silence is uncomfortably comfortable with totalitarianism and/or suicide.

H37 Epstein, M. "Kritika v konflikte s tvorchestvom (Metodologicheskie tupiki sovremennoi burzhuznoi kritiki)." *Voprosy literatury* (Moscow) No. 2 (1975):131–68.

Sees Western criticism as in a crisis of redundancy, devaluing the very objects it should protect. Discusses types of criticism (romantic, psychological, etc.). Compares A2 and Barthes's *The Pleasure of the Text*.

H38 Shipman, Dru. "Sontag on Photography." *Afterimage* 2.7 (Jan. 1975):4–12.

Critiques B44, B45, B46, and B48 in 10 subheaded segments, four paired summary and discussion segments, book-ended by an Introduction and a concluding "Discussion." Because Sontag's essays are "rife with apparent

contradictions,” the summaries (not summarized here) attempt “to distill [each essay’s] best possible sense” as prologue to analysis.

*Discussion of “Photography”* Takes the equation of photography per se with the oppressive social use of the medium as both blaming the victim and trivializing the problem of “capitalist technocratic oppression.” Describes as “unyielding” Sontag’s equation of photography with male chauvinism, which equation aligns it with both a “vicious” sexual exploitation and a “vacuous” (because “flawed” and “pathetic”) sexual impotency and also asserts a larger “duplicity,” i.e., the illusion of conceptual innocence fostered by photography’s failure to be openly interpretive, a failure attributable to its denial of narrative or functional analysis.

*Discussion of “Freak Show.”* Takes the equation of Whitmanism and the photographic as circular—adduced to describe Diane Arbus as denying Whitman’s (and Walker Evans’s) “leveling” of cultural distinctions, though at the cost of rejecting “photography and Whitman alike” via an overly reductive view of idealization and a corresponding failure to distinguish a photograph from its subject.

*Discussion of “Shooting America.”* Takes the equation of photography with Surrealism as equating art with narrative or conceptual understanding—an understanding Surrealism disavows in claiming that “found” objects, if not “artistic” (in the sense of being intended, of having qualities), are still art. Linking Surrealism with “bourgeois sensibilities” or “adventurism” thus allows Sontag to describe Surrealism and photography as alike in their (Shipman’s phrase) “twisted pseudo-innocence.” Yet Sontag’s apparent equation of Surrealism with anti-intentionality does not (exactly) square with her praise of surrealist fiction—where it is the “complexity” of Surrealism as intentional “concept” that matters, though paradoxically this renders the surreal only an “aspect,” not a substance, by contrast with photography, the nostalgic appeal of which is entirely a function of subject matter.

*Discussion of “Photography: The Beauty Treatment”* Though she compares photographic “beauty” to the “truthful” beauty typically associated with fine arts, Sontag’s equation of photography with cosmetology invokes beauty as a matter of (falsifiable, or simply false) appearances. But insisting on truth-as-narrative is no less tautological (or reductive) than photography’s purported claim that truth is beauty; if photographs are “dissociative seeing,” and if truth is “associative,” then photos cannot be seen as true or beautiful, if only because beauty is itself already a concept.

*Discussion of themes common to the four articles, and conclusion.* Takes “narrative and dissociation” as primary “themes” adumbrated in Sontag’s various metaphoric equations. Takes her elaboration of them—whereby narrative equates with function, with understanding, with the literary and photography with appearance, with information, with the visual—as depending upon a category mistake whereby “image” is taken for “appearance” or “look.” Yet if “narrative explains functioning, but is not functioning itself, so an image represents the

surface, but is not the surface itself.” Sontag thus reduces representation (narrative, image) to essence (function, surface), though at the cost of falsifying the world, rendering *its* look “derivative or illusory.” Though photographic images *may* be (ontologically) dissociative, they are often taken and used conceptually, narratively, interpretively, uses Sontag does not sufficiently acknowledge, or attributes (negatively) to photography itself, as when a viewer takes a photo as its subject. But the claim that photographs are *not* narrative, not conceptual, not political or moral is contradicted by the implication that they propound “false history, bad politics,” which amounts to allowing that photographs *do* have various uses, though it is phrased as if photography were intrinsically evil. Takes Sontag’s anxiety at the thought that viewers take photographs as their subjects as confirming an underlying fear that they don’t, that photographs *do* conceptualize “in the sense associated with art,” as if she were afraid of the erotics of art advocated in B15.

H39 Kramer, Hilton. “The Evolution of Susan Sontag.” *New York Times*, 9 Feb. 1975, D1, D31.

Takes B50—in light of Sontag’s essays on photography and her B17 praise of Riefenstahl—as evincing a reversal of Sontag’s position on the relation of form and content in art.

H40 Holthusen, Hans Egon. “Leni Riefenstahl in Amerika: Zum Problem einer ‘faschistischen Ästhetik.’” *Merkur* (Stuttgart) 29 (June 1975):569–78.

Sees Sontag’s B50 critique of fascist aesthetics as itself aestheticizing fascism, falling prey to the same “cult of beauty” that she disavows in Riefenstahl. Urges that Sontag’s preference for Vertov ignores the Stalinism of his films even while she criticizes the Nazi element in Riefenstahl’s. Takes Sontag’s analysis of Nazi insignia as evoking their sexual attraction in terms less moralist than Sadean.

H41 Nelson, Gary. “Reading Criticism.” *PMLA* 91 (Oct. 1976): 801–15.

Analyzes how critics disguise their psychological ambivalence behind prefatory disclaimers. Urges a consciously dramatic understanding of literary and critical history on the premise that the “dialectic between self and other, embedded in the critic’s language and method, is really what criticism is ‘about.’” Takes Sontag’s career as a case in point: (1) in the way her arguments, in their almost interchangeable topics, reveal an “underlying and often unconscious quest for the origins of her own critical consciousness”; (2) in the way her discussion of modernism in B28 “demonstrates the profoundly self-referential qualities of her critical writing,” to the extent that the modern artist’s resort to silence as “antidote” to consciousness mimes her own process of critical “disburdenment”; (3) in the way her preface to A2 privileges issues raised rather than the writer raising them, even when the issue is often that of the exemplary writer. See K71.

H42 Rosenthal, Alan, and Bruce Berman. “Reflections by Two Scholars on Susan Sontag’s ‘Promised Lands.’” *Film Library Quarterly* 10.1–2(1977):51–6, 72.

*Rosenthal*: Praises Sontag for her empathetic concern while avowing that E7 is marred by “a lack of documentary responsibility” because it offers no critical commentary qualifying or contextualizing either the “misleading discussions” of her onscreen speakers or her own “stereotypical portrait” of the Arab/Israel conflict.

*Berman*: Praises Sontag’s lucidly formalist concern for the interplay of sounds and images. Takes Sontag’s obsessive regard for Israel’s own obsessions as implying that “the real threat... comes from within.”

H43 Schwartz, Sanford. Review of *On Photography*. *Art in America* 65.6 (Nov.–Dec. 1977):31–2.

Observes how Sontag’s A12 method does not so much resolve questions about photography as replace them “by a set of literary and political metaphors, and it’s the metaphors that are resolved.” Takes “the key” to A12 to be Sontag’s claim that a photograph, in view of its supplemental relationship to reality, “can never fully be a work of the imagination”; because time aestheticizes photography, photography cannot sustain “historical consciousness.” Objects that narrative arts also shift meanings, can be or become false; that visual arts (painting, sculpture) do lead to “understanding.” Takes her critique of the political datedness of Walker Evans as proof that photography *can* be an art of “historical” consciousness.

H43a “A Box of Jewish Giants, Russian Midgets, and Banal Suburban Couples.” In *Reading into Photography*, edited by Thomas F. Barrow, Shelley Armitage, and William E. Tydeman, 93–9. Albuquerque: Univ. of New Mexico Press, 1982.

H43b “A Box of Jewish Giants, Russian Midgets, and Banal Suburban Couples.” In *The Art Presence*, 226–33. New York: Horizon Press, 1982.

Revises H43 to include a paragraph on the Arbus-like aspects of Sontag’s approach to photography.

H44 Cadden, Michael. “Artaud at the Crossroads.” *Theatre* 9.3 (1978):60–6.

Credits A11 with “giving the works of Artaud their proper perspective in English.” Notes the analogous procedures of Sontag and Artaud—each “mothers” a self by writing through, about, some other self—by reference to B11 and D5, though she is praised for taking Artaud’s writing *textually* rather than biographically. Expresses disappointment with Sontag’s more literalist understanding of Artaud’s theories of theater, in view of her “Gnostic evaluation” of Artaud’s attitudes toward the body, in view of Derrida’s analysis of Artaud’s fear of “derivation,” of the psychological, the historical.

H45 Henderson, Byron. Review of *On Photography*. *Structurist* (Saskatoon) No. 17–18(1977–1978):136–40.

Comprises four segments. (1) Contrasts the Marxist critique of individualism to the relativist subjectivism of Western liberalism in order to ask *why* the latter “unpleasant philosophy” has persisted. (2) Divides [A12](#) into three sections, an introduction (the first chapter, which catalogues “the sins of photography”), a conclusion (the last chapter), and the middle four chapters, which provide “closer examinations” of the book’s larger cultural claims. (3) Summarizes Sontag’s conclusions about the alienating and endistancing aspects of the capitalist “Image-World,” where the infinite compatibility of photos replaces (denies) the conflicts among their referents. (4) Praises Sontag’s breadth of research while pointing to the paradox by which Sontag’s critique might be more aptly leveled at commercial than “art” photography, were not art photographers so eager to claim influence and priority.

H46 Kerr, Don. Review of *On Photography*. *Structurist* (Saskatoon) No. 17–18 (1977–1978):132–5.

Comprises three numbered segments. (1) Observes the (deconstructive) pleasure to be derived from Sontag’s “sudden and striking comparisons”; connects her analysis of photography to McLuhan’s of electric media. (2) Lists three [A12](#) themes (that photographs enlarge our notions of the visual, enforce a grammar or ethics of seeing, and reduce the world to an anthology of images); takes Sontag’s paradoxically aphoristic style as of a (pleasurable) piece with the book’s circular or “discontinuous” agenda. (3) Reads the [A12](#) claim that “The camera makes reality atomic, manageable, and opaque” as “the best single-sentence introduction to” Sontag’s [A12](#) themes.

H47 Walker, Susan. “Susan Sontag.” In *American Novelists since World War II*, Dictionary of Literary Biography, Vol. 2, edited by Jeffrey Helterman and Richard Layman, 447–51. Detroit: Gale Research, 1978.

Surveys Sontag’s “dual career of commentator and artist,” though the novels get somewhat slighted in the bargain.

H48 Brooks, Colette. “The Theatrical Image.” *Theater* 9.2 (Spring 1978):129–32.

Describes [A12](#) as more revealing of “ontological thought itself than of the ontology of photography, of the way thought determines reality, of the way photography’s putative realism is, in fact, a *surrealism* that screens us from reality itself. Contrasts Sontag’s view of photography with Benjamin’s of (Brecht’s) epic theater; while Sontag “decries the atemporal nature of photography,” Benjamin praises the theatrical “gesture” that resists temporality, that alienates, hence reveals theatrical illusion. Grants Sontag’s major premise (that photography misrepresents) while denying her conclusion (that we accept its misrepresentation).

H49 Shloss, Carol. “Sontag on Photography: The Politics of Vision.” *Canto* 2. 1 (Spring 1978):181–6.

Takes Sontag’s “aggressive argument” against photography’s “aggressive” relation to reality as indicating the uneasy terms of her critique. Scores her adversarial relation to photographers she discusses, some of whom, by contrast

with the insidiously “private” motives of their hobby- and family-photographer kindred, evince a socially responsible mode of “self-reflection.”

H50 Jacobs, David L. “Sontag Re-viewed.” *Afterimage* 6.1–2 (Summer 1978): 37.

Takes the photographic community’s negative response to A12 as (understandable) “sour grapes.” Sees the (ideologically) disquieting aspect of Sontag’s brief against photography—for conflating “image and experience,” for fragmenting instead of historicizing—as the true target of her critics.

H51 Lesy, Michael. “An Unacknowledged Autobiography.” *Afterimage* 5.7 (Jan. 1978):5.

Links Sontag’s neo-platonic view of photography to semiotics and its “unresolved” argument as to the source of the “webs” of meaning it discovers (the world vs. the analyst). Describes a set of semi-oracular contradictions as deriving from an internal dialogue over “a moral question of deliverance or damnation” in which “the author,” with help from various titles on her shelves, concludes that photography is of the devil’s party, only to change pictures; what was a post-lapsarian rag heap becomes a pre-lapsarian garden; where photography is once mistaken “for the Industrial Revolution,” now it reminds photographers “of the blessings of innocence and chance.” As a result, the author’s (spider-like) balance becomes all the more “precarious.”

H52 Sarris, Andrew. “Notes on the Fascination of Fascism.” *Village Voice*, 30 Jan. 1978, 1, 33, 36.

Indirectly accuses Sontag of the very tendency to “flatten out the historical perspective of the Nazi era” of which Sontag accuses Riefenstahl in B50. Takes Sontag’s “discrediting” of Riefenstahl as preliminary to a general discussion of “fascist art.” Extends Sontag’s critique beyond 1975 by reference to the Sex Pistols, Pasolini, and Bertolucci. Takes this interest in fascism as a “sexual pathology” applicable to all as preferable to the “Old Left” tendency to separate politics and sex.

H52a “Fascinating Fascism Meets Leering Leftism.” In *Politics and Cinema*, 107–15. New York: Columbia Univ. Press, 1978.

H53 Kaufmann, James. “Photography and Death.” *Afterimage* 5.9 (Mar. 1978):8–9.

Compares Lesy’s *Wisconsin Death Trip* and Hujar’s *Portraits in Life and Death*, though Lesy’s commentary on the former and Sontag’s D23 introduction to the latter are the primary texts. Attacks Lesy for repressing or displacing death (and life). Links Sontag’s elitist view of the artist as “a transcendent social type” to Stoicism; takes Hujar’s photographs as undercutting the view that thinking can transcend death anxiety. Denies the claim that photography affects (our sense of) time; denies that lives are livable without illusions. Denies finally any “specific” link between photography and death.

H54 Drews, Jörg. "Photographie: Etwas 'da draußen' zeigen: Erweiterungen und Widersprüche zu Sätzen von Susan Sontag." *Merkur* (Stuttgart) 32 (Apr. 1978):406–16.

Quotes passages from A12d as pretexts for speculations on the lack of a tradition of photo criticism; on the distinctions between beauty and ugliness, between the significant and trivial; on whether the different "auras" of painting and photography involve different relations to time, whether photographs are the most "mysterious" of "modern" objects.

H55 Westerbeck, Colin L., Jr. "On Sontag." *Artforum* 16.8 (Apr. 1978):56–60.

Accuses Sontag of "misrepresentation" in claiming that neither Muybridge nor Atget can be understood as auteurs. Links Sontag's auteurist criterion to formalism; acknowledges that B15 goes so far beyond formalism as to repudiate it by insisting on the necessity for aesthetic judgment—though such judgments can be seen as a heroic if defensive response to the solipsistic isolation of the artist/audience encounter, which amounts to raising alienation itself to a "philosophical preference." Takes A12's "mass of contradictions" as providing its "fascination and power." That it is about far more than photography authorizes "a certain amount of doubling back"—as when photography is seen as "an imitation of work" and is subsequently critiqued for being too easy, not worklike enough. Takes Sontag's (Whitmanesque) sensibility as the "glue" that holds A12 together, especially so given the way Sontag's tendency to fragment and to elevate the ostensibly trivial echoes the flaws she attributes to photographic seeing. Links Sontag's disapproval of Michael Lesy and Diane Arbus as involving their "morbidity," which recalls A3 to the point where "Sontag's contempt for Arbus feels almost as if it is contempt for herself." Sees Sontag's ambivalent relation to photography—as filmmaker, as photographic subject—as confirming that her view of art as work no longer allows for joy or pleasure.

H56 Berger, John. "Photography: God of the Instant." *Seven Days*, 7 Apr. 1978, 28–30.

Provides a short history of photography, as a *metaphysical practice*, which system Sontag critiques via her equation of capitalism and image-production. Because photography fixes appearances, thus prizing them away from contextual and narrative meaning, photographs are free to circulate. Distinguishes private from public photographs, the former always read as continuous with their originary contexts, the latter providing knowledge equivalent "to the memory of a total stranger," the "instant" look of a "totally estranged god" for whom the equation of justice with history no longer holds.

H56a "John Berger: Ways of Remembering." *Camerawork*, July 1978, 1–2.

Revises [H56](#). Abbreviates the history of photography. Adds a discussion of “alternative” uses of photography, keyed to the prospect of extending “private” to include “public” uses.

*H56b*

“Uses of Photography.” In *About Looking*, 48–63. New York: Pantheon Books, 1980.

Revises and expands [H56](#) and [H56a](#); includes nearly all the material from the earlier two texts, augmented by extended quotations from [A12](#).

*H57* Hardwick, Elizabeth. “Knowing Sontag.” *Vogue*, June 1978, 184–5.

Contrasts Sontag then, appearing on the New York scene with the “jarring particularity” of the young Mary McCarthy, with Sontag now, socially mobile but still devoted to writerly solitude. Contrasts the variety of Sontag’s creative accomplishments to the American preference for “a singular concentration” in its representative geniuses. Though “Susan Sontag is all *ideas*,” she is marked with a “bohemian” sensibility; though well versed in high culture, she is also “an original observer of popular culture.” In her self “creation,” she is “the most interesting American woman of her generation.”

*H58* Hiepe, Richard. “Welches Weltbild zeigt das Abbild?” *Tendenzen* (Munich) No. 120 (July–Aug. 1978):4–17.

In asking “which image of the world?” is provided by photography, this review essay critiques Sontag’s [A12d](#) appraisal of the medium for attributing to photography a consumerist hopelessness that more properly belongs to capitalism and to her own “disillusionment.”

*H59* Jacobson, Dan. “Sickness and Psyche.” *Commentary*, Oct. 1978, 78, 80–2.

Observes how Sontag’s symptomatic analysis of illness metaphors denies their symptomatic applicability to real illnesses. Sees as self-indulgent Sontag’s treatment of evidence: of *Domby and Son*, of the (assumed) relation between literature and belief. Describes a mismatch between Sontag’s arguments regarding TB (where the examples are mostly literary) and cancer (where examples are drawn from medicine to evince the view that cancer is psychologically determined, from newspapers to confirm its metaphoric value, though the two halves of the cancer case are “welded together” more by rhetorical force than cause-effect logic). Contrasts Sontag’s fear of psychologizing cancer with her eagerness to psychologize culture.

*H60* Overy, Paul. “Sontag and Berger: Parsimony in Photography.” *Art Monthly* (London) No. 20 ([Oct.] 1978):10–1.

Disputes Sontag’s journalistic [A12](#) claim that photography can only “collect” the world. Praises her salutary “pessimism about photography,” especially her (metaphorical) call for an “ecology” of images in the face of their capitalist proliferation. Takes this “parsimonious approach” as typically American, though

Sontag misses its applicability to the work of Paul Strand. Suggests that Berger (H56a) is “too generous” in his praise of A12, though his efforts to link photographs to narrative, to memory, provide the “conservationist remedy” only alluded to by Sontag.

H61 DeMott, Benjamin. “Susan Sontag: To Outrage and Back.” *Atlantic*, Nov. 1978, 96–9.

Takes Sontag’s early work as flawed by “thinness of experience, lack of conversance with common life” and by the conviction that “the only sounds intelligence makes are violently denunciatory.” This “remoteness from life” and a “weird enthusiasm for the defilements of personal agony” characterize *On Photography* and haunt the characters on view in *I, etcetera* as well. Describes A13 as “a real turn” in Sontag’s career and “immeasurably her shrewdest” book in that its critique of illness metaphors undercuts “precisely the dogmas about the human condition that have shaped the work of the artists she has most admired and imitated.”

H62 Kher, P.R. “Susan Sontag’s Aesthetic: A Moral Point of View.” *Osmania Journal of English Studies* (Hyderabad) 15 (1979): 55–64.

Comprises four segments. (1) Takes Sontag’s Wildean formalism as moralistic to the extent that “camp” is an inclusive aesthetic, of which Sontag’s equation of style and will is a key theoretical assumption. (2) Instances Sontag’s claim that aesthetic experience “nourishes” moral consciousness by reference to B19 (and other essays) where “sensory anesthesia” is modern art’s condition of possibility. (3) Cites “The Aesthetics of Silence” (and B30) as exemplifying the “shock therapy” that modern art can provide. (4) Takes Sontag as extending “Arnold’s notion of culture by taking into consideration the values of mass culture.”

H63 Mednick, Liz. “Après Moi, etcetera.” *New York Arts Journal* No. 13 (1979):13–5.

Takes A13’s title as “equilibration,” as an “egalitarian neutralizer.” Equates the “accumulation” of “conceptions” or “images” in “Project for a Trip to China” to the touristic accumulation of images critiqued in A12. Ascribes a similarly abstract two-dimensionality to the characters in “Debriefing” (Julia I, II, III) and “American Spirits.” Sees the gender-uncertainty of “Old Complaints Revisited” as evoking Woolf’s *Orlando*, as instancing another form of equivalency or evasion. Describes the reductive A12 use of “to take,” as subliminal aggression/murder, as itself reductive—a reductiveness equally on view in Sontag’s criticism and her fiction.

H63a Excerpts. In *Contemporary Literary Criticism*, Vol. 13, edited by Dedria Bryfonski, 518. Detroit: Gale Research, 1980.

H64 Mitgutsch, Waltraud. “Salvation or Annihilation?—The Theme of Regression in Contemporary Literature (Susan Sontag, James Dickey, Theodore Roethke).” *Revue des langues vivantes* 45.1 (1979):64–77.

Takes the theme of regression as a modern version of the “quest myth.” Elaborates the theme’s contradictory elements—a “fulfillment of the self in a state of mystical consciousness” that is also a “submersion” and “disintegration” of the self—by reference to the poetry of Roethke, Dickey’s *Deliverance*, and *Death Kit*. Each journey departs from “a sense of reality that has lost its meaning and coherence,” a reality described (in A3) “in terms of disgust,” though the descents are “into even more frightening pits of chaotic decay.” Takes the regression in A3 less as a quest than a reduction, a “fusion” of *Eros* and *Thanatos* that “achieves no synthesis.” Evokes Marcuse’s *Eros and Civilization* as describing “The transformed reality” of nature (by contrast with Hester as a “false Ariadne” in A3) that symbolizes the “balance of destruction and procreation” arrived at in Roethke and Dickey.

H65 Pokorny, Józef. “Niepewność.” *Literatura na świecie* (Warsaw) No. 9 (1979):330–3.

Appears in the same issue as B11h, B15j, and F50a; summarizes Sontag’s influence and accomplishments. Describes her as meeting the literary needs of the 1960s. Adduces B15j as instancing her “uncertain” rhetoric; against *all* meaning, in fact opposing only metaphor or symbolism.

H66 Cheatwood, Derral. Review of *On Photography*. *Studies in the Anthropology of Visual Communication* 5 (Spring 1979):140–3.

Reviews the “gee whiz” enthusiasm of other reviewers in arguing the necessity of treating A12 at serious length. Scores Sontag’s “vague” or contradictory definition of photography as some monolithic or “generic whole,” as though the distinctions among uses, traditions, or photographers, cited periodically in A12, finally do not count. Takes Sontag’s claim that time “positions” all photos “at the level of art” as confirming her disregard of qualitative criteria; disputes the claim that photography cannot narrate by reference to its scientific uses. Takes the created aspect of reality, its status as a “social act,” as compounding simple distinctions between reality and image. Because Sontag underplays the world-creating aspect of “visual tools,” she “understates” photography’s power to define “common sense.”

H67 Brooks, Peter. “Death of/as Metaphor.” *Partisan Review* 46 (Summer 1979):438–44.

Takes Sontag’s A13 wish to purify language of metaphor as itself metaphoric of the necessity to grasp the unknown in terms of the known. Cites Benjamin’s “The Storyteller” as instancing the extent to which making sense of death generally is the end, not only of narrative, but of life itself, hence the “certain logic” by which disease metaphors make meaning. Adduces the literariness of TB metaphors, by contrast with a paucity of cancer figures and the ascendancy of a “professionalized” medical discourse, as indicating “a changed conception of death.” Describes psychoanalysis as a last-ditch form of metaphoric interpretation. Takes the word “cancer” as always already metaphorical (tumor=crab), for which self-conscious figurality, rather than metaphoric purity, is the only alternative.

H67a Excerpts. In *Modern American Literature*, 4th ed., Vol. 5, A Library of Literary Criticism, edited by Paul Schlueter and June Schlueter, 450–1. New York: Frederick Ungar Publishing, 1985.

H68 McCole, John. "Walter Benjamin, Susan Sontag, and the Radical Critique of Photography." *Afterimage* 7.1–2 (Summer 1979): 12–4.

Assesses A12's contribution "to a radical interpretation of photography," as well as the difficulties that follow from Sontag's "attempt to be both critic and moralist," by reference to radical critics of the 1920s and 1930s, to Sontag's earlier critical writings, and to the "particular photographic work" (of Diane Arbus) that "shaped" Sontag's "impression of the medium." Addresses the (Frankfurt School) critique of mass culture occasioned by the collapse of "socialist realism" and the rise of fascism as prologue to elaborating Benjamin's analyses of the relations between aesthetic and technological practices, as advocating the destruction of "aura" while mourning the waning of (narrative) tradition. Describes Sontag's B15 animus against interpretation and content as anticipating her critique of photography; takes her B19 confidence in a new (technological) sensibility as symptomatic of her decision to let photography (rather than modern art generally) bear the brunt of her critique. Takes A12's genesis in Sontag's negative reaction to Arbus as sounding an autobiographical note that enlivens her writing while rendering evaluation of her approach more difficult.

H69 Bassoff, Bruce. "Private Revolution: Sontag's *The Benefactor*." *Enclitic* 3.2 (Fall 1979):59–73.

Describes the "Moebius strip" relationship of A1's frame narrative to its various "embedded stories," a relationship that makes it hard "to invoke any notion of verisimilitude" beyond that of desire. Takes the uncertainty of point of view as symptomatic of "a dialectic of freedom and slavery" and of the paradoxical if not masochistic "formation of the self via (sadistic) identification with others. Takes the "privacy" of Hippolyte's dreams and the self-dispersion of his narcissistic relations with (numerous) others or doubles as a species of ideological trap, akin to that Adorno diagnosed in Kafka, a self-containment amounting to self-destruction via the rejection of history, of consequences. Thus Hippolyte "uses Frau Anders to create a para noid order that liberates him from his own 'vacancy,' "though the "privacy" of that revolution only confirms (while mirroring) the "social entropy" or "double bind" by which "the automatism of the individual" reveals "society as the enemy of his individuality."

H70 McCaffery, Larry. "Death Kit: Susan Sontag's Dream Narrative." *Contemporary Literature* 20 (Autumn 1979):484–99.

Describes the "formal" experimentation of A3 by reference to the "dream tale" tradition. Both Borges (in "The South") and Sontag evoke a "dual perspective" involving a "manifest" level the details of which are drawn from "actual materials of the dreamer's life," however distorted the manifest/latent

relationship may be. Describes the formal devices used to “create verbal equivalents of essentially nonverbal experiences”—in A3, the shifts from third to first person, the introjected parenthetical “nows,” the dry tone that seems to naturalize the “yoking of realistic details to wholly illogical contexts.” Diddy’s “real life” is reconstructed, so as to elaborate Diddy’s dream-work attempt to both undo yet confirm the suicide he commits in the book’s first pages. Takes Diddy’s dramatic ambivalence as personified in Hester and Incardona, the one a blind (Dantian) “life” force who finally leads Diddy into darkness, the latter an embodiment of masculine animal vitality and death whom Diddy has to kill twice over. Elaborates the novel’s “perception” theme, as if visual ugliness itself were the source of Diddy’s suffering.

H71 Galloway, David. “Susan Sontag, On Photography.” *Creative Camera* No. 177 (Mar. 1979):98–100.

Takes her A12 remarks on the photographic appropriation of experience as “Among Sontag’s best-focused arguments.” Scores her remarks on easel painting and tourism as uninformed; portrait paintings *have* been taken as “co-substantial” with their subjects, and premodern tourists did carry preconceptions and collect souvenirs. Takes Sontag as least self-assured when discussing art, especially the distinction between a medium (language, photography) and an art form (poetry, art photography), and most lacking when discussing how photography transforms and is transformed by experience.

H72 Kuspit, Donald. “To Interpret or Not to Interpret Jackson Pollock.” *Arts Magazine* (Mar. 1979):125–7.

Attacks Sontag’s (Cartesian) view of interpretation for reducing artworks to “thing” status, versus her view that interpretation reduces them to meaning. Claims that “description” is even more reductive than interpretation, “because it does not suspect itself.” Because interpretation “does not assume that it is necessarily experiencing the work directly,” it generates exactly the sense of contingency and immediacy Sontag reserves for description and transparency.

H72a “To Interpret or Not to Interpret Jackson Pollock.” In *The Critic Is Artist: The Intentionality of Art*, 161–9. Ann Arbor, MI: UMI Research Press, 1984.

H73 Plessner, Monika. “Verteidigung der Metapher: Zu Susan Sontag: Krankheit als Metapher.” *Merkur* (Stuttgart) 33 (Mar. 1979): 280–4.

Critiques Sontag’s A13a argument *against* metaphor. Claims that she both over- and underestimates the capacity of metaphor, that she invokes a “body-soul-dualism” that has long been obsolete in the human sciences. Argues that metaphor ought to be allowed the role of “concurus dei” instead of condemning it to the “concurus diaboli.”

H74 Sandall, Roger. “Transcendentally Speaking: A Moralists’ Thoughts on Photography.” *Art International* (Lugano) 23.1 (Apr. 1979):34–6.

Mocks the “incorrigible” Hegelian optimism (and vocabulary) of A12, though credit is granted Sontag for her analyses of Diane Arbus, of the *flâneur*, of the pathos of photography. Objects to her equation of “Faustian” man and “Western” (consumer) culture, and to her Freudian equation of photography and predation, especially in view of her earlier praise of aesthetic aggression. Takes Sontag’s insensitivity to the relation of means and ends (especially as regards totalitarian politics) as raising doubts about her “moralist” persona.

H75 Schwarcz, Vera. “The Domestication of Walter Benjamin: Admirers Flee from History into Melancholia.” *Bennington Review* No. 4 (Apr. 1979):7–11.

Accuses Sontag of “taming” Walter Benjamin by attributing his ideological predilections to temperament, rewriting his temporal-historical convictions and loyalties in spatial-astrological terms. Sees this as misrepresenting Benjamin’s friendship with Brecht and his passion for historical change.

H76 Bellour, Raymond. “Dehors, dedans: L’image.” *Magazine littéraire* Nos. 151–152 (Sept. 1979):92–4.

Takes the x-ray negative that Claudia gives Hans in *The Magic Mountain* as troping the new (semiotic, cannibalistic) relation between interior images (disease metaphors) and exterior images (photographs) that Sontag elaborates with unprecedented “acuity” in (the difference between) A13e and A12f. Compares Sontag’s critique of photography’s anti-Platonism to Barthes’s analysis of “The Rhetoric of the Image”; both observe photography’s capacity to “dissolve” history. Compares Sontag’s elaboration of the “logic” of metaphor to Foucault’s history of madness. Praises Sontag’s (ecological) efforts to deconstruct the cultural mechanism of delirium by which perception passes “from the screen (conscious-unconscious) of the subject to the world as screen.”

H77 Plagens, Peter. “Fretting About Photos: Four Views.” *Art in America* 67.7 (Nov. 1979):11, 13, 15, 17.

Reviews three photo-critical “problems” elaborated in recent books. Urges that photography’s “deflection of the truth” (e.g., Sontag’s claim that photography falsifies by fixing a particular instant) is generally “overestimated” (arguments “that photography is both a Peeping Tom and thief-in-the-night” are self-contradictory if photography does *not* “see something worth seeing”). Takes the anxious concern for the social relation of photographer to subject as resting more on “suspicion” or assumption than proof—as when Sontag “swallows Walter Benjamin whole.” Whether photography is art—or whether photographs vary enough in quality for some to be art—is ironically settled by appeal to the subversiveness of Modernism and the claim that photography is indeed subversive of high art canons.

H78 Light, Steve. “The Noise of Decomposition: Response to Susan Sontag.” *Sub-Stance* No. 26 (1980):86–94.

Critiques Sontag’s F53 remarks on the status of intellectuals in France and America as “incredibly *uncritical*” of “intellectual life in America.” Cites the “total domination” of American philosophy departments by analytic philosophy—versus social philosophy à la Hegel, Marx—as contradicting the claim that

American intellectuals enjoy a supportive “cultural net” in academia; urges that the “loyalty” shown by French intellectuals in literary journals evinces a “public sphere,” by contrast with the narrowly “American” reception accorded members of the Frankfurt School who fled Hitler’s Europe. Scores Sontag’s enthusiasm for rock music as confirming the parochial mindlessness of American public culture, its “null” quality, as against Sontag’s claim that French culture is resistant to modernism and has “nothing more to export.”

H78a “Le bruit de la décomposition: Réponse à Susan Sontag.” *Les temps modernes* 36 (Dec. 1980):1093–106.

H79 Schor, Naomi. “Fiction as Interpretation/Interpretation as Fiction.” In *The Reader in the Text: Essays on Audience and Interpretation*, edited by Susan R. Suleiman and Inge Crosman, 165–82. Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 1980.

Takes Kafka as proving that Sontag’s A2 argument against interpretation is untenable; takes her call for a “poetics of the novel” as more constructive for pointing to the metalinguistic element of fiction, to the extent that “interpretation is viewed not as something done *to* fiction but rather as something done *in* fiction.” Compares Sontag’s condemnation of interpretation as (masculine) aggression and mastery to Peirce’s description of interpretation as infinite striptease; instead of an “erotics of art” we need “an *erotics of hermeneutics*.”

H79a “Fiction as Interpretation/Interpretation as Fiction.” In *Reading in Detail: Aesthetics and the Feminine*, 120–30, 165–9. New York: Methuen, 1987.

H80 Starenko, Michael. “Benjamin, Sontag.” *Exposure* 17.4 (1980): 20–31.

Comprises five segments. (1) Compares B50 to Riefenstahl’s *The Blue Light*; claims that Sontag’s “utopian attitude toward (erotic, immediate) sensations” parallels “certain tendencies of fascist sensibility,” tendencies Benjamin’s theses on photography directly challenge, though Sontag’s picture of Benjamin (and of photography) discounts exactly this antifascist element. (2) Cites Benjamin’s critique of the “negativistic quiet” of left-wing radicalism as prologue to discussing Brecht’s critique of bourgeois/ consumerist “Art.” Contrasts Sontag’s (“traditionalist”) view of Surrealism with Benjamin’s; compares Sontag’s “idealist” view of painting to Baudelaire’s. (3) Compares Nazism and Zionism as positing (in each case) a trans-historical, mythical (racial) “substance” or essence, an aesthetic a-historicism that Benjamin takes photography (technology) to “politicize” and “despiritualize.” (4) Compares painting (as “the cult of ‘the signature’”) with photography (as “the cult of ‘the historical’”) as evincing the “issue of modernization.” Takes the “irrational” critique of modernism (à la Sontag) as denying “the *historical necessity* of the bourgeoisie”; takes Benjamin’s concept of “aura” as a version of Marx’s “commodity fetishism,” which the social or “exhibition value” of photography overcomes. (5—Epilogue)

Describes Sontag's Platonic A12 critique of mass culture as reversing the terms of B19, as instancing an "Abstract Expressionist" or individualist sensibility by contrast with Benjamin's Brechtian advocacy of the social "refunctioning" of artworks via a "future tense" concept of intertextuality.

H81 Taylor, Benjamin. "A Centered Voice: Susan Sontag's Short Fiction." *Georgia Review* 34 (Winter 1980):907–16.

Compares modernity's search for borderline knowledge to writers like Montaigne or Goethe "who pledged themselves to certain central ideals of civilization." Takes Sontag's theoretical writings as illuminating, yet estranged from, the modernist complicity of poetry and philosophy; takes *I, etcetera* as continuing her theoretical project by other means. Interprets "Old Complaints Revisited" via Wittgenstein's *Tractatus*; in both, the world is coextensive with language. Yet somehow (the narrator's) "will" desires to exceed those limits by continuing to "translate" or confront them, creating literature out of the "distance between herself and the only self-image worthy of her." "Project for a Trip to China" and "Unguided Tour" are as much "essays as stories" in the sense that, in the tradition of Romantic travel literature, "in them Sontag has invented nothing save herself." In the former, selfhood is made problematic by reference to Mao's proscription of selfhood and Hermann Broch's denial of it ("Confession is nothing") in favor of knowledge ("Knowledge is everything"). Yet Wittgensteinian "silence" can hardly result in knowledge, if perhaps in the "impatience" with knowledge that is (and calls for) literature. In the latter case, history and memory are experienced as fragmentary, as ruined. "Arrangement" gives way to "accumulation." Yet accumulation or collection is transmuted into an ethic of readiness, a refusal of the self's dissolution, or apotheosis. Reduced to nullity by modernism, the "I" of *I, etcetera* "is still something."

H81a Excerpts. In *Modern American Literature*, 4th. ed., Vol. 5, A Library of Literary Criticism, edited by Paul Schlueter and June Schlueter, 451–2. New York: Frederick Ungar Publishing, 1985.

H82 Becker, Carol. "Too Closeup for Comfort: Susan Sontag's *On Photography*." *Tabloid* 1.1 (Spring 1980):25–36.

Five subheaded segments are framed by scenes from a Sontag appearance at the University of Illinois at Chicago. *The Method*. Because much of A12 expresses "ambivalence or confusion about her subject," in part by "fragmenting" the medium that she accuses of fragmenting the world, Sontag's "method" is one of "giving" (as when acknowledging the life-changing reality of photographs of Bergen-Belsen and Dachau) and "then taking away" (in finally asserting that photographs drain away reality). *The Camera as Actor*. Takes Sontag's willingness to assign photography-as-medium a causal (vs. symptomatic) role in social alienation as marking her own alienation, though her overemphasizing the primacy of form over content or context denies the

difference “between commercial and non-commercial imagery.” *The Power of Images: Love or Lust*. Concludes, in view of her failure to distinguish reactionary nostalgia from Blakean idealism, that Sontag “does not trust people...to reorganize their lives and their perceptions.” *The Democracy of Vision*. Counters Sontag’s critique of photography’s (touristic) indiscriminateness by observing that its accessibility offers “a wealth of information and experience,” especially to those traditionally excluded from the art world. *Tensions in the Photographic Process*. While photography may be a vehicle for nostalgia, it may also “be a clarification and even a demystification of the past.”

H83 Nelson, Gary. “Soliciting Self-Knowledge: The Rhetoric of Susan Sontag’s Criticism.” *Critical Inquiry* 6 (Summer 1980): 707–26.

Takes the “tension” between the critic as text-constrained reader and the critic as “a writer working out a vision of the world” as Sontag’s “primary subject.” Describes her “consistent aim” of defining a modernist “aesthetic of absence” as “motivated by her sense of difference” or distance from the objects of her study and as a (paradoxical) “search for a text that is utterly unknowable,” beyond the contamination of language. Takes the modernist “reversibility” or instability of terms or values (in “Theatre and Film” and *Illness as Metaphor*) as a question as much of critical rhetoric as of subject matter. Takes Sontag’s interest in giving “a name to the silence a work evokes” as a specifically *critical* (vs. phenomenological) problem, as if a motive of her criticism were “to extend self-knowledge to include its own abolition,” its own (*a posteriori*) silence, a motive “both intensified and distanced through criticism.” Discusses “Trip to Hanoi” as exemplifying Sontag’s project—in the (ironic) way she responds to the “baby language” of her hosts and to herself as “a figure for the culture she left behind,” in her reluctance to quote as evincing a rhetorical emphasis on the writer’s need to find “the right language” in the midst of cultural contingency and mediation, on the way self-reflexivity (in “The Pornographic Imagination” as well as “Trip to Hanoi”) paradoxically connotes a desire for self-transcendence via (sexual, communal) identification. Advocates a readerly balance of self-reflexivity and identification à la Sontag as a means of perceiving “continuity and development” in Sontag’s criticism. Countering the dialectical self/other “limitations of critical writing by exploiting them,” Sontag “dramatizes” the endless (hence endlessly repeatable) effort “to isolate her subject and to preserve its otherness”—via quotation marks, for example, or by parody, or by “argumentative deflation” via “parenthetical qualification and elaboration.”

H84 Todd, Jennifer. “The Roots of Pictorial Reference.” *Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* 39 (Fall 1980):47–57.

Critiques Nelson Goodman’s “conventionalist” theory of pictorial reference in five sections. (1) Agrees that “pictorial representation is constituted by the rules of the symbol system to which the picture belongs,” but contends that Goodman’s lack of “explanation why we pick the symbol systems we do” leaves us without criteria for declaring any interpretation a misinterpretation. (2) Denies that photographs are automatically “accurate,” production variables being too

numerous to *guarantee* accuracy; denies that photographs “automatically represent what caused them” on the grounds that causality itself is ambiguous and variable. (3) Takes Sontag’s A12 view of photography as “conventionalist,” to the extent that what seems like an instance of “technological determinism” in her critique of photography’s nominalism is finally a claim that what a photograph or photography represents “is determined by the mass public.” (4) Uses newspaper photographs to argue that symbol systems are “partly constituted by social relationships” and that we should and “do take facts about these relationships to count as good reasons for changing our interpretation[s]” of photographs—this urged against the Sontagian implication that such arguments are impossible. (5) Argues that “The roots of reference can indeed reach into our political life” when arguments over the interpretation and value of photographs involve “moral and political” considerations. (See I4.)

H85 Kendrick, Walter. “Eminent Victorian.” *Village Voice*, 15–21 Oct. 1980, 44–6.

Takes her *Under the Sign of Saturn* praise of Paul Goodman’s underappreciated variety as backhandedly indicating Sontag’s own critical “*metier*”; though she aspires to his kind of “multifaceted creative and critical presence,” it is the “intriguing doubleness” of her critical pieces that distinguishes them from her other (lesser) efforts. Sees the disparateness of A15 (by contrast with A12 and A13) as its true “unity,” as “sensibility” and “modernity” play off each other in her subjects and her style, her “Victorian” decorum both absorbing the “shock effects of modernism” and fulfilling the critic’s duty of mediating between artist and audience. Takes her B50 critique of fascist aesthetics as extending the worry expressed in A12 and A13 that “the real thing and its image” are getting ever more “confused”; describes her preference for Syberberg’s anti-realism as a (weak) antidote. Takes the “elitism” of A15 as a function of publication venues, while declaring the academically canted piece on Artaud “the finest example we’ve had in decades” of the “literary portrait,” where the figure traced is as much the author writing as the author written, thus bridging the gap between criticism and creativity. Though she writes about non-Anglo subjects, mostly German in A15, Sontag’s real models are James and Matthew Arnold after all.

H85a Excerpts. In *Contemporary Literary Criticism*, Vol. 31, edited by Jean C. Stine and Daniel G. Marowski, 411–3. Detroit: Gale Research, 1985.

H86 Brady, Leo. “A Genealogy of Mind.” *New Republic*, 29 Nov. 1980, 43–6

Reads *Under the Sign of Saturn* as “self-assemblage,” as meditating on the “genealogy of mind” linking Sontag with her models and with her 1960s self. Where A2 established a “new sensibility” by linking fragments of high and popular culture, A15 privileges those “leopards in the temple of literature” who “explode the lies of order,” even and especially the orders of self-consciousness

and language—hence her distrust of both fascist aestheticism and democratic trivialization via images and metaphors. Takes Sontag’s faith in the “sufficiency of mind” as betokening her self-questioning and spiritually ambitious fascination with those who strive to be “Romantic eccentrics in a time of mass societies.” Wonders whether Sontag’s attack on Romanticism (Riefenstahl) via Romanticism (Syberberg) avoids “a corruption of means and terminology,” whether “melancholic self-questioning” can maintain the distinction between aesthetic and political “dictatorship.” Avers that melancholy is “as much a means of drawing attention to oneself as it is a psychic communion with higher values,” while allowing that Sontag’s implicit concern with her own public image is “all too modern.”

*H86a* Excerpts. In *Contemporary Literary Criticism*, Vol. 31, edited by Jean C. Stine and Daniel G. Marowski, 415–6. Detroit: Gale Research, 1985.

*H86b* Excerpts. In *Modern American Literature*, 4th. ed., Vol. 5, A Library of Literary Criticism, edited by Paul Schlueter and June Schlueter, 451. New York: Frederick Ungar Publishing, 1985.

*H86c* “A Genealogy of Mind: *Under the Sign of Saturn* by Susan Sontag.” In *Native Informant: Essays on Film, Fiction, and Popular Culture*, 126–31. New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 1991.

H87 Simon, John. “From Sensibility toward Sense.” *New Leader*, 15 Dec. 1980, 22–4.

Attacks “French-derived criticism” by attacking Sontag’s A15 “tendency to sprinkle complication into her writing.” Takes her “Fascinating Fascism” renunciation of “camp” as characteristically “irresponsible” in its lack of elaboration. Takes her Foucauldian praise of Artaud’s “aesthetics of thought” and “phenomenology of suffering” as her “erotics of art” tricked out “in sheep’s clothing.” Concludes that Sontag is so “capable” a critic that she should disavow “metacriticism.”

*H87a* “From Sensibility toward Sense: Susan Sontag, *Under the Sign of Saturn*.” In *The Sheep from the Goats: Selected Literary Essays of John Simon*, 20–8. New York: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1989.

H88 Finkelstein, Joanne L. “Sociology and Susan Sontag: Re-shaping the Discipline.” *Women’s Studies International Quarterly* 4 (1981): 179–90.

Condemns a retreat in contemporary sociology from an “emancipatory interest” à la Gadamer to metalinguistic “interpretive frameworks” that foreclose

experience. Takes Sontag's critique of photography as a kindred attack on a supposedly "objective" methodology; takes Sontag's project as an explicitly "Feminist" alternative that will: (1) attack "authoritarian moral habits," (2) "recognize the implicit definition of reality carried in every idea," (3) "restore primacy to the direct engagement of individuals with their social world," and (4) move "toward the pursuit of luminosity" and "transparency." Because this "new intellectuality" has been marginalized by "the present knowledge systems," dissidents like Barthes and Sontag must show the way.

H89 Molderings, Herbert. "Argumente für eine konstruierende Fotografie." *Kritische Berichte* (Weidenhauser) 9.3 (1981):15–22.

Characterizes A12d as an "expression of shattered illusions" and Sontag's theory of photography as a "capitulation of empirical thought." Argues that photography does not differ fundamentally from other creative arts.

H90 Morris, Meaghan. "On the On of On Photography." *PhotoDiscourse* (Sydney College of the Arts, 1981):28–9.

A "speech act" analysis, in four (or five) sections, of A12. 1. *On "on."* Links "on" to the passion and skepticism of essay writing; essayists "write on" in the sense of defacing and changing a surface. 2. *On About.* Describes Colin Westerbeck Jr., by contrast with William Gass (see H55, J175), as "an About man," as seeking transparency and continuity where Sontag practices a self-reflective (self-contradictory) kind of "writing." 3. *On "modern"* Observes the "messy" conflict of A12's ("unmodern") expository style and its "non-systematic order." *Insert: quotations.* Disputes Sontag's equation of "quotation" and "debris"—by quoting her. 4. *On Quotation.* Because "*On Photography* says 'quotes,'" implying a lost object, it evokes an originary (non-modern) Eden, by contrast with the "histories" or activities implied by "quotation." Concludes that A12's writing, in seeking an order based on ("modern") fragments, is thereby "no-longer modern."

H90a "On the 'On' of *On Photography*." In *The Pirate's Fiancée: Feminism, Reading, Postmodernism*, 151–4. London: Verso, 1988.

H91 Stone, Jennifer. "Beyond Desire: A Critique of Susan Sontag's Production of Pirandello's *Come tu mi vuoi* (Teatro Stabile di Torino, Stagione 1980/81)." *Yearbook of the British Pirandello Society* No. 1(1981):35–47.

Praises Sontag for emphasizing photography—via a photographer character and the cinematic manipulations of music, lighting, and sets—as a trope for the Pirandellian themes of resemblance and reflection. Faults Sontag on Lacanian grounds for implying a place beyond desire, beyond language—an implication clearer in the program notes than in the production itself, which evinces a "pessimism of desire" by "neutering" the play's (sometimes homosexual) characters and by ferociously "essentializing" the oppositions between masculine

and feminine. Though Sontag sees her production as appropriating Pirandello for feminism, Stone concludes that it is “Ferocious but not feminist.”

H92 Tallmo, Karl-Erik. “Fiktionens möjligheter: Susan Sontag.” *Radix* (Lund) 4.2 (1981):22–53.

Describes (vs. interprets) the “possibilities” of Sontag’s fiction in [A1m](#), [A3e](#), and [A14e](#). Elaborates Sontag’s narrative and formal techniques as they change over time. Characterizes Sontag’s fiction as a literature that “speculates by way of its very form.” Compares *The Benefactor* to *The Story of O*, also to Simone Weil. Discusses the narratological consequences of the dissolution of the ego in *Death Kit*. Discusses *I, etcetera* and (briefly) Sontag’s discomfort with autobiography.

H93 Brooke-Rose, Christine. “Eximptions.” *Genre* 14 (Spring 1981):9–21.

Comprises three segments. (1) *Silence and the limits of consciousness*. Distinguishes per [B28](#) between “loud and soft” styles of silence. Contrasts Sontag’s dream of “an ideal plenitude to which the audience can add nothing” to Barthes’s notion of “the writerly”; contrasts this paradox to Kristeva’s distinction between “experience-of-limits” literature (as the inheritor of psychoanalysis) and the “collectivizing” mass media. (2) “*Postmodernism*”—*what is it?* Notes how Sontag’s descriptions of modernist writers (Robbe-Grillet, Stein) who try to “out-talk language” via “uninflected” transcriptions of surface detail paradoxically echo Barthes’s critique of realist fiction as prologue to a discussion of “self-cancelling” terminological distinctions between “Modernism” and “Postmodernism.” (3) *Where do we go from here?* Cites Sontag on the limits of irony and Northrop Frye on the way “exhausted literature turns to more popular forms” as anticipating a reinvigorating “naivety” in American fiction—though not to the point of embracing the “gnostic dream” of total consciousness.

H93a “Eximptions.” In *A Rhetoric of the Unreal: Studies in Narrative and Structure, Especially of the Fantastic*, 339–63, 414–5. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1981.

H94 Craven, David. Review of *Under the Sign of Saturn*. *Telos* No. 48 (Summer 1981):189–94.

Reads Sontag as neglecting Benjamin’s concern for a future-oriented, “post-auratic” non-commentative criticism that would (surrealistically) “de-fetishize art.” Critiques her equation of Nazism and Romanticism as misreading the “content” of Riefenstahl’s *Triumph of the Will*, in part for ignoring how the interplay of form and content in the film “expresses an irreconcilable split that can only be self-destructive.” Critiques “Syberberg’s Hitler” for equating fascism and utopianism (contra Marcuse) and for equating surrealism with hopelessness (contra [A12](#)). Takes the [A15](#) chapters on Barthes, Goodman, and Canetti as recycling “the old liberal ideal of eccentricity.”

H95 Wollheim, Peter. "Photography Is Not a Language." *Vanguard* (Vancouver, B.C.) 10.7 (Sept. 1981):30–5.

Remarks the "structuralist" intersection of photography (a "representational art") and semiotics (as a "critique of art as a system of cultural representations"). Urges, against the "nominalist view" of "photographs as pictograms" à la Barthes, that the interpretation of photographs depends crucially on "specific cultural and biological situations" beyond the reach of Saussurian binarism. Accuses Sontag and Max Kozloff alike of falsely conflating photography and representation, photography and voyeuristic manipulation; describes the photography/language analogy as depending on the existence "of self-evident and objective features" as against the "personal and subjective," implicitly formalist and elitist, practice of structuralist criticism.

H96 Bruss, Elizabeth W. "Susan Sontag." In *Beautiful Theories: The Spectacle of Discourse in Contemporary Criticism*, 203–80, 504–6. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Univ. Press, 1982.

*Beautiful Theories* has three parts, each of two chapters and an introduction. In introducing Part 2, "The Creative Impasse: The Case of Gass and Sontag," Bruss elaborates her reasons for pairing the two (each is a "creative" writer whose most creative writing is arguably theoretical and essayistic, each has academic training in philosophy, etc.). Chapter 4, "Susan Sontag," similarly, has two main sections, each with two parts, the first (in both cases) an extended comparison (Sontag with Gass, A12 with A13), the second a more inclusive redescription of the "economy" of Sontag's authorship.

Where Gass struggles to keep fiction and theory ontologically distinct (his stories are inevitably parables of category mistakes), Sontag, especially in her early work, refuses such distinctions, seeing fiction and theory both as in the service of sensual or emotional experience. Sontag's fictional voice, however, is as mediated and as rhetorical as her theoretical voice, but without the edge of argumentation and analysis that renders her theoretical writing so energetic and emotional. Sontag works best when she has something to work *against*, some *other* text or sensibility; in so doing, her essays can try "to negate those forces that an art work, in its positivity and focus on its own construction, must accept," as is evident in the "minor key" emotions aroused by her novels and short stories. Where Gass makes relatively few conceptual claims, Sontag's "essays bristle with generalizations" that "risk inaccuracy and expose themselves to challenges and counterarguments." Especially in view of her position as an unallied generalist, "Sontag's theorizing has been obliged from the start to raise issues, invent dilemmas, project domains of thought—and to do so in a way that would make her own proposals seem not simply accurate or original but necessary."

Avows that Sontag's critics employ an unrefined notion of authorship to condemn Sontag as idiosyncratic, taking the "first person" of her essays as an autobiographical "I," and taking her occasional shifts of position as *merely* occasional, a matter of intellectual "fashion." Argues that this use of the *auteur*

principle does not allow nearly enough for the radical “Timeliness” of Sontag’s concerns, a timeliness evident in her view that (as Bruss puts it) “art is a category that exists in time” and that “the function of theoretical activity is itself subject to change.” Even her use of the “first person,” for example, often condemned for its impersonality, is better understood as a rhetorical device for gaining access to a mode of perception or sensibility, which Sontag herself may be as much repulsed by as attracted to. Lists changes in Sontag’s project over time—an increasing distrust of the autonomy of the aesthetic, an increasing predilection for extended argument and more concrete displays of evidence, an ever decreasing concern with “individual sensibility” and a less unquestioning view of “individual authorship”—as prologue to marking its continuities: her concern with “the aftermath of aesthetic and political modernism,” her preference for “abstract, difficult, and alien works,” her continued reliance on a limited set of (typically paired) themes or value terms, whereby “Skepticism alternates with fascination, moral stricture with voluptuous abandonment, silence brings on volubility, authority leads to anarchy.” Her general tendency is toward “inflation,” making a position “more incisive and extreme” as a means of “testing the power of a term and the kind of commitment it deserves.” And her primary value terms involve questions of “healthiness or unhealthiness.” In which light Bruss observes “how delicate and even how moving the connections are” that bind Sontag’s various efforts dialogically together.

Compares *On Photography* (A12) and *Illness as Metaphor* (A13): their extensive accumulations of evidence and argument; their aspect of “self-cancellation,” by which they turn tables on some of Sontag’s earlier claims; their tactic of generalizing to *attack* generalization; their “polished” if not “sonorous” prose; the way each explores a series of languages or metaphors used to describe the world or its objects in order to make things “interesting”; the way each book pays special attention to the correlations obtaining between artifacts and social processes; the way each book invites comparison with the work of a theoretical predecessor (Benjamin, Foucault); the way each concludes by invoking an “ecological” ethic of restraint. Observes, despite these similarities, how differently they were received. Takes A13 as fulfilling the promise of A12 by extending its range of interests to include *all* image systems; linguistic, literary, cinematic, etc. Moreover, A13, rather than employing *On Photography*’s iconoclastic “wave” strategy of attacking particular artists and apologists in succession, gains greater distance from its subject by means of a more demystifying or genealogical investigation of the larger social processes by which disease has become a primary trope for “the large insufficiencies” of modern culture, which the metaphoric logic of disease-talk inevitably turns back upon its sufferers. In the later book Sontag achieves a steady “moral” vantage point—unlike the fascination/repulsion economy of interests on view in *On Photography*—that lends purpose and meaning to the “distanced” impersonality that critics of her earlier work often found objectionable.

Concludes by considering the larger “economy” of Sontag’s writing in light of the more explicitly theoretical procedures in her later works. Sontag continues her “tendency to adopt extreme positions,” the result being “writing with a peculiar quality of naked insistence.” Her theorizing also avoids “models” of the Al-thusserean sort, preferring a looser sense of “correlations” elaborated via hypothetical narratives. Where her earlier essays stipulated deductive “laws,” her later writings are more inductive and testable, though the way Sontag provides documentation—elaborating examples in “thickly embedded sentences” that “lend an air of lawlike generality”—results in “temporary universals,” general rules expressed hypothetically, thus allowing those “rules” to be questioned. Indeed, Sontag’s rhetorical models are combative (the manifesto, the court brief) and increasingly impersonal. Her citation habits show an increase of indirect quotation and symptomatic analysis, the better to avoid seduction, to assert distance. Where Sontag’s earlier essays sought to avoid conflict by avoiding interpretation—however conflictual the claim—her later work accepts conflict as a necessary condition, as evidenced by an increasing gap between Sontag’s doctrine in favor of less generalization and greater restraint and her conceptual design that relies “on expansion, growth, and overgeneralization.” Accordingly, Sontag’s “theory can now more readily take on a variety of objects and can do so without the entropic wearing down of a self-absorbed and hence self-defeating system.”

H97 Hardwick, Elizabeth. Introduction to *A Susan Sontag Reader*, ix–xv. New York: FSG, 1982. See [A18](#).

Introduces [A18](#) via homage, portraying Sontag as a “lover” of the essay, as the beloved of essay readers, and via imitation, by miming Sontag’s “floating, restless expositions.” Discusses her vocation for the “variegated sensibility of modernism,” as expressing “her own being,” her status as a “good European,” her patience in uncovering the (moral, political) intentions implicit in the international urban style-scape, in the individual figures (Bresson, Riefenstahl) of her study. Describes the “haunting” or “chilling” complexities of the cultural “designs” (figural, political) under analysis in [A12](#), versus the more “exhilarating” exposition of her “Notes on ‘Camp.’” Observes the combination of the “devious” and the “rational” in Sontag’s fiction, though the “availability” of “harmony” between experience and language “is an illusion” for readers and characters alike. Contrasts the “ardently interesting” provocations of [A2](#) to the “more serene,” “less imploring” essays on Benjamin and Canetti.

H97a Excerpts. In *Contemporary Literary Criticism*, Vol. 31, edited by Jean C. Stine and Daniel G. Marowski, 416–7. Detroit: Gale Research, 1985.

H98 Svendstedt, Carl Henrik. “Sontag, Montag... Den motsägelsefulla essäisten.” *Allt om böcker* [Stockholm?] No. 1 (1982):10–1.

Characterizes Sontag as essayist against the background of American culture. Though some of her essays appear as if written in a flash of Sunday inspiration (e.g., “Against Interpretation”), most bear traces of the hard and tedious labor of long, gray Mondays. Characterizes her aesthetic position as conservative, romantic, elitist, her political position as radical-democratic and egalitarian. Concludes that Sontag’s fame surpasses her actual originality and ability as a writer.

H99 Zverev, A. “Tupik: K voprosu ob amerikanskom postmodernizme.” *Inostrannaia literatura* (Moscow) No. 6 (1982):199–207.

Assesses the decay of American modernism with especial reference to the writings of John Earth and Sontag. Condemns Sontag as “reactionary,” given the contrast between her pessimistically antirealistic fiction and her left-wing political journalism, yet large portions of “Against Interpretation” are quoted verbatim, as if the opportunity to put her critical ideas into circulation were really the point.

H100 Ross, Stephanie. “What Photographs Can’t Do.” *Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* 41 (Fall 1982):5–17.

Comprises an introduction and two sections. (1) Agrees with A12 and Roger Scruton that photography (like painting) is *less* capable than narrative arts of carrying or retaining moral messages. Denies Sontag’s distinction between “emotional power” and “understanding” (the former as something that fades, the latter as a function of narrative) because “We can learn from our emotions and through them.” Agrees that moral attributes and judgments are “transcendent” for requiring a sense of function or context beyond “momentary appearance.” (2) Denies Scruton’s claim that photographs are *not* artistic or intentional representations, hence are unable to convey moral thought, by reference to Hines’s *Breaker Boys* photograph which, via subject matter (vs. narrative), does make us think (contra Sontag) “of aging and time” and does evidence (contra Scruton) aesthetic “selectivity.”

H101 Holthusen, Hans Egon. “Die Abenteuer der kritischen Phantasie: Über Susan Sontag und ihr neues Buch.” *Merkur* (Stuttgart) 36 (Mar. 1982):254–65.

Describes *Im Zeichen des Saturn* (A15b) as a naive, toxic, hallucinogenic “trip of critical imagination” lacking precise argumentative analysis. Is especially critical of Sontag’s laudatory review of Syberberg’s *Hitler*.

H101a “Die Abenteuer der kritischen Phantasie: Susan Sontag im Zeichen des Saturn.” In *Vom Eigensinn der Literatur: Kritische Versuche aus den achtziger Jahren*, 194–211, 264. Stuttgart: Klett-Cotta, 1989.

H102 Ring, Harry. “Susan Sontag’s Conversion to Anticommunism.” *Militant*, 2 Apr. 1982, 10–1, 16.

Attacks the B67 equation of communism and fascism as lacking the “class analysis” that would distinguish capitalist Argentina from “worker state” Poland;

attributes this failure to an “anti-working class approach” on the basis of Sontag’s cautionary G67 remarks on religious fundamentalism in Eastern bloc countries.

H103 Grenier, Richard. “Ideological Haute Couture: The Conversion of Susan Sontag.” *New Republic*, 14 Apr. 1982, 15–9.

Downsizes Sontag’s “big conversion” to anti-communism by reference to her earlier writings. Takes the conversion—as evidenced by the difference between Sontag’s remarks at a PEN “Conversation” and her subsequent Town Hall talk, or by subsequent revisions of the Town Hall talk itself—as evincing a “cyclical” attitude toward communism (vs. Sontag’s constant opposition to the United States) determined less by political literacy than “the phase of the moon in Paris.” See K132.

H104 Idei, Yasuko. “Susan Sontag’s *Against Interpretation* and Her Critical Essays and Activities.” *Kyushu American Literature* (Fukuoko) 23 (May 1982): 53–7.

Praises Sontag’s “brave” commitment to analyzing the contemporary sensibility. Summarizes her advocacy of style over content, silence over meaning; esteems her film and theater essays more highly than her writings on fiction.

H105 Altman, Dennis. “Susan Sontag’s New-Found Anti-Communism.” *Meanjin* (Melbourne) 41 (June 1982):223–7.

Assigns the “furor” surrounding the Town Hall speech less to Sontag’s alleged failures to distinguish fascism from communism or “to disassociate herself from the authoritarian anti-communism of the right” than to the general frustration “felt by many on the left” when it comes, for example, to applying “criteria of human rights” to Soviet bloc countries. Because it is far more obviously (and globally) dangerous to treat the Soviet Union the same as South Africa, the “simple” truth about communism, in view of the “contradiction between support for human rights and support for peace,” “will not, in itself, tell us how to act.”

H106 Otasevic, Miroslava. “Cogito, Ergo Boom!” *Knjizevnost* (Belgrade) 74 (June 1982):845–7.

Takes B67[c] as confirming that Sontag is a “radical skeptic” whose self-confuting “dualism of will and intellect” leads ultimately to an intellectual implosion: “cogito, ergo boom!” Criticizes the American Left for its lack of program and consistency, Sontag for her inconsistencies—her variously canted pronouncements on Riefenstahl, which Sontag only inconsistently acknowledges. Concludes with the nostalgic prediction that Sontag’s radical journalism (“Trip to Hanoi”) will be remembered despite her subsequent recantations.

H107 Shaw, Peter, and Seymour Martin Lipset. “Two Afterthoughts on Susan Sontag.” *Encounter*, June–July 1982, 38–42.

Comprises two pieces, Shaw’s “The Incident” and Lipset’s “The Background.”

“The Incident.” Notes that Sontag’s Town Hall audience was most offended by Sontag’s explanation of the self-delusions of anti-anti-communism. Identifies the practice of “bracketing” unacceptable truths—the testimony of East-bloc exiles, for example—as a habit Sontag both condemned and obeyed in the speech, to the extent that her critique of Polish communists followed her declaration of support for Salvadorian rebels.

“The Background.” Contrasts the self-delusions of Western leftists—as derived from a Utopian projection “on to foreign soil” of “an ideal against which they can invidiously compare their own native land”—to Marx’s own critique of utopianism. Confirms on historical grounds Sontag’s equation of communism and fascism as prologue to claiming that “Western society is better than its major ‘leftist’ political rival.”

H108 Kramer, Hilton. “The Pasionaria of Style.” *Atlantic*, Sept. 1982, 88–92, 94.

Explains Sontag’s fame by reference to her “faculty for dividing intellectual opinion” and her timely defense of the “new sensibility” after the collapse of high modernism. Criticizes *A Susan Sontag Reader* for blurring the historical record in its omission of “One Culture and the New Sensibility,” the essay where the shift from Arnoldian seriousness (content) to Wildean aestheticism (style) is most clear. Takes “On Style” as uninformed and unresolved as regards the content/style dichotomy; though Sontag “comes down on the side of style,” her formalism is less a philosophy of art (or art’s autonomy) than of life (or taste). Adduces Sontag’s change of heart regarding Riefenstahl as evincing a desire to transcend aestheticism, though not desire enough.

H109 Kramer, Hilton. “Postmodern: Art and Culture in the 1980s.” *New Criterion* 1.1 (Sept. 1982):36–42.

Observes the speed with which modernist avant-gardism has become the bourgeois norm. Takes camp (and B11) as the instrument by which art is emptied of content and made available to a double-reading that preserves avant-garde privilege while reviving “philistine” styles and works.

H109a “Postmodern: Art and Culture in the 1980s.” In *The Revenge of the Philistines: Art and Culture, 1972–1984*, 1–11. New York: Free Press, Macmillan, 1985.

H110 Aronowitz, Stanley. “Opposites Detract: Sontag versus Barthes for Barthes Sake.” *Voice Literary Supplement*, Nov. 1982, 13–4.

Criticizes Sontag for excluding the Marxian-semiotic Barthes from A17. Her Barthes, like her A18 Sontag, is a self-advertising aesthete—despite the fact that “Sontag is the antithesis of Barthes.” Takes Sontag as “the true inheritor of the ’50s critical avant-garde” in her attack on imitation and on political criteria of literary value. Though Sontag followed her followers into the New Left, “she never abandoned the struggle to make art a vehicle for cosmic salvation and

personal redemption.” Where Sontag is a modernist “prophet of genius,” Barthes is a postmodern Kant, providing “a treasure of categories.” If Sontag “is a part of her time,” and if “her time is no longer ours,” Barthes remains “the electronic musician of criticism” with whom we have yet to catch up.

H111 Goodman, Walter. Fair Game (“Under the Sign of Sontag”). *New Leader*, 13 Dec. 1982, 9–10.

Puzzles Sontag’s status as “this country’s exemplary intellectual” under three headings: “Under the Sign of Sontag,” “Image of America,” and “Reality of Cancer.” Describes the 1960s and 1970s essays as “European” in their advocacy of aesthetic “*Extremity*.” Observes the “trendiness” evident in Sontag’s once far-left “political” tastes while chiding her *On Photography* inability to “resist a dig at capitalism” despite her Town Hall change of heart. Seconds the H61 claim that *Illness as Metaphor* hints at a reevaluation of literary modernism.

H112 Jacobson, Julius. “Reflections on Fascism and Communism.” In *Socialist Perspectives*, edited by Phyllis Jacobson and Julius Jacobson, 119–54. Princeton: Karz-Cohl Publishing, 1983.

Distinguishes communism from fascism: where fascism serves the capitalist class via a repressive state apparatus, communism *is* a repressive state. Takes differences among communisms in Russia, Poland, and China as indicating that Sontag’s “communism is successful fascism” formula “has more shock value than educational merit.” Observes that, contra fascism, communism “is adorned with a human face; a mask it must wear,” which makes it dangerous to “authentic socialists and radicals.” Ponders the problem of determining “in human, moral terms” the equivalency of Hitlerism and Stalinism; the contest seems enough of a draw as to make “fascism and Stalinism meet as *equals* in the inferno of authoritarian/totalitarian repression.” Asks, given the long history of the fascism/communism equation, why Sontag chose to (re)make it, and why her audience took such deep offense. Concludes that the fear of giving aid and comfort to reaction is as much a symptom of pessimism as the neoconservative fear of lending any credence to the left.

H113 Karl, Frederick R. “The Possibilities of Minimalism.” In *American Fictions 1940/1980: A Comprehensive History and Critical Evaluation*, 384–416, 610–1. New York: Harper & Row, 1983.

Describes minimalism as the opposite of pop; where pop art omits nothing, minimalism depends on irony, negation. Describes Sontag’s formalist criticism as more minimalist than her fiction, though A1 and A3 are both “minimalist experiences” to the extent that they “gloss” her critical ideas. Takes both novels as European in emphasizing interior (vs. exterior) spaces, a dialectic played out in A1 via the contrast of Hippolyte (dreams) and Jean-Jacques (achievement), even if Hippolyte seems, after an oddly American fashion, addicted to actions. Takes A3 as more obviously “phenomenological,” for taking place “within Diddy’s head,” or Hester’s (her blindness troping his interiority). Takes Diddy’s final vision of necropolis as figuring “the discrete, anarchic, object world of

American culture,” a world, like Diddy, “intent on extinction and obliteration.” Thus “Minimalism meets apocalypse.”

*H113a* “The Possibilities of Minimalism.” In *American Fictions 1940/1980: A Comprehensive History and Critical Evaluation*, 384–416. New York: Harper Colophon, 1985.

H114 McCreadie, Marsha. “The Theorists: Susan Sontag, Annette Michelson, Maya Deren, Hortense Powdermaker, and Claude-Edmonde Magny.” In *Women on Film: The Critical Eye*, 80–95. New York: Praeger, 1983.

Notes how film embodies the formal properties (speed, transparency) conducive to the erotic art experience Sontag advocates. Takes her [D14](#) review of *Flaming Creatures* as exemplifying her epicene aesthetic, her shifting views of Riefenstahl as evincing her inductive (“chameleon-like”) intellectual style. Takes her advocacy of synaesthesia (in [B25](#)) as marking her commonality with other female film theorists.

H115 Roudiez, Leon S. “Against the Ideological Grain.” *World Literature Today* 57 (Spring 1983):219–23.

Takes the “phatic” quality of her fiction as providing “familiar ground,” making Sontag “appealing to both American and European readers”; links [A1](#)’s thematic confluence of women, death, illness, and guilt to Sontag’s other fictions and to “the sensitivity of the sixties and seventies.” Discusses her views on American fiction; describes [B15](#) as evoking the dilemma of criticism, the “attempt to steer a steady course between...reproduction and substitution.” Praises [B11](#) for taking account of “the complexities and contradictions” of Camp; praises [B67\[c\]](#) as confirming a willingness to go ideologically “against the grain,” something Sontag herself praises in Benjamin and Barthes.

H116 Parini, Jay. “Reading the Readers: Barthes and Sontag.” *Hudson Review* 36 (Summer 1983):411–9.

Takes Barthes’s failure to go “beyond the essay” as evincing “the spiritual limits of aestheticism itself, which cannot help separating style from content.” Though Sontag’s introduction to [A17](#) is praised, comparison of the two writers favors Barthes: “the real thing looks even more real beside the imitation.” Takes Sontag as divorcing style from content, especially in the aphoristic form of her own writing, even while disputing the distinction. Where Barthes “interprets the world-as-text,” Sontag “is just too deadset against interpretation to read the world at all.”

*H116a* Excerpts. In *Contemporary Literary Criticism*, Vol. 31, edited by Jean C.Stine and Daniel G.Marowski, 418–9. Detroit: Gale Research, 1985.

H116b Excerpts. In *Twentieth-Century American Literature*, Vol. 6, The Chelsea House Library of Literary Criticism, edited by Harold Bloom, 3728–9. New York, 1987.

H117 Page, Judy Lynn. “Understanding Susan Sontag’s Critique of Communism and the Democratic Left: Confession? Conversion? Conundrum?” Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication (Corvallis, OR, Aug. 6–9, 1983). Available as ERIC ED233347. 50 pp.

Comprises nine subheaded segments, plus a three-segment “Afterword” addressing Sontag’s copyright-infringement suit against the *Soho News*. *Sontag’s Criticism*. Takes her B67c critique of communism as consistent with her “provocative” brand of “modernist” rhetoric. *The Setting*. Described as “a gathering of partisans.” *The Speech*. Describes the “content” of the speech: thesis (that official condemnations of the repression of Solidarity are hypocritical), antithesis (so too was the left-wing double standard that condemned fascism while suborning communism), synthesis (since communism is fascism, both are equally blameworthy). “*Subversive*” *Rhetoric*. Defined via key features: “antiethos speaking,” “‘devil theory’ persuasion,” and “irony as an archetypal pattern.” *Anti-Ethos Speaking*. Takes Sontag’s B67c rhetoric as opposing foes and partisans alike, herself included. *The Devil Theme*. Describes Sontag’s attributions of fascist “villainy” to communism. *Irony*. Takes Sontag’s remarks about *Reader’s Digest* as doubly ironic, not so much declaring it generally credible but as being, on the topic of émigré intellectuals, more truthful than most leftist venues; takes her disavowal of irony in her speech as ironic provocation. *Dialectic Substance*. Describes Sontag as intending a “symbolic” overthrow through various Burkean “naming” strategies. *Conclusions*. Takes the mixed reception of B67c as proof that “irony does not work without considerable risk to the rhetor” and (hence) of the need for “non-conventional” rhetorical criteria.

H118 Magala, Sławomir. “Imperium umysłu.” *Miesięcznik literacki* No. 9 (Sept. 1983):70–8.

Sontag’s chief Polish translator describes her “Empire of the Mind” by reference to B50, D25, B30, and A12. Takes her arguments as complex, “bumpy,” as addressing multiple issues simultaneously, attending to the social uses or values of the works or genres under discussion.

H119 Kent, Deborah. “Blind Women: The Perspective from Fiction.” *Journal of Visual Impairment and Blindness* (Oct. 1983):404–5.

Decries the novelistic habit of using blind heroines as symbols by which to “expound” themes rather than “depicting fully developed characters.” Takes Hester in A3 as “the embodiment of all the dark forces of evil and destruction.”

H120 Indiana, Gary. “Susan Sontag’s ‘Unguided Tour.’” *Artforum* 22.3 (Nov. 1983):66–8.

Ponders the aptness of Venice (“a nobler Disneyland”) as setting for the “aching backward glance” that is Sontag’s film *Unguided Tour* (E19). Observes

the layering of sounds and images, thens and nows; “He” and “She” trying (and failing) to pay homage to beauty, to romance, against “the indifference of old stones.” Notes the links between E19 and Sontag’s other works, especially the trope of “ingeniously clearing tracts of overdeveloped mental territory.” Sets Sontag’s critique of photographic tourism against the surrealism of modern “timelessness” and the difficulty of “traveling to the end of certain preoccupations by finding some precise correspondence for them in the external world.”

H121 Brookeman, Christopher. “Susan Sontag: Against Interpretation.” In *American Culture and Society since the 1930s*, 203–14, 225–6. London: Macmillan, 1984.

Takes Sontag’s B15 stance as privileging “sensuous form” over “moral content.” Such a view allows a confluence of avantgarde experimentalism and pop art kitsch, while cutting against the countercultural contention that elite and populist art have nothing in common or the view that art and science amount to opposed cultures. In photography Sontag finds a technology that, far from extending experience, “anaesthetises” it, thus reducing the “moral and sensory queasiness” that avant-garde modernism seeks to induce. Takes Sontag as akin to Godard in exhibiting “alertness to developments across the whole field of the contemporary arts.”

H122 Green, Jonathan. “Only a Language Experiment.” In *American Photography: A Critical History 1945 to the Present*, 193–301. New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1984.

Credits Sontag and Alan Sekula with “a major change in the way photographs were made and read.” By contrast with the *Aperture* school of interpretation, which connected image and world symbolically, or with John Szarkowski’s formalism, which essentially refused to read the image, Sontag and Sekula connect image and world *historically*. Key here is Barthes’s notion of the “dual nature” of the photograph; as uncoded analogical truth, as a “coded” cultural message. “It is this coded message that Sontag and Sekula wish to explicate.” Both see photographs as rivaling the literary understanding of the world, substituting an (only) apparently automatic or unmediated grasp of experience for the more personal, narrative, historical grasp encouraged by language. Takes Sontag’s doubt “that a photograph can help us to understand anything” as covering a Puritanical fear of graven images, a fear founded on the premise that there is only a single “road to reality and truth,” the literary road. Behind Sontag’s “prose is a subtle elitism that assumes the hierarchy of the intelligentsia over the proletariat.” Counterclaims that visual truth is truth no less, and that linguistic meaning is just as partial and contingent.

H123 Lewicki, Zbigniew. “Three Dimensions of Entropy: William Gaddis, Susan Sontag, John Updike.” In *The Bang and the Whimper: Apocalypse and Entropy in American Literature*, 103–116. Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1984.

Studies entropic decay—informational, intellectual, moral—in modern novels. Describes Diddy's progressive A3 retreats into enclosures, into himself, as instances of “a closed system” on (or past) the verge of entropic collapse.

H124 Hickman, Larry. “Experiencing Photographs: Sontag, Barthes and Beyond.” *Journal of American Culture* 7.4 (Winter 1984): 69–73.

Takes the “completed past” as modeling for Sontag the “ethical and political” reality that photographs distort or replace. Critiques Sontag's account of photography's shortcomings—its “seductiveness” or predation or passivity—via counter-examples. Disputes Barthes's “nothing-but-denotation” theory of “The Photographic Message,” especially as it conflicts with a Platonic critique of appearances. Prefers John Berger's “dynamic” epistemology to the “static” view of Sontag and Barthes.

H125 Frimodig, Margareta. “Språkets makt: En studie i Susan Sontags essä *Illness as Metaphor*.” In *Sydsvenska medicinhistoriska sällskapets årsskrift*, 207–13. Lund: Sydsvenska medicinhistoriska sällskapet, 1985.

An extended paraphrase of A13, praising Sontag's pedagogical ruminations on “the power of language.”

H126 Rabkin, Gerald. “Milan and His Master.” *Performing Arts Journal* 9.1 (1985):17–24.

Asks whether Sontag's production of Kundera's *Jacques and His Master* was “felicitous”; answers via dialogue among a literary critic, a theater critic, and an actor. Where The Literary Critic describes the production as demonstrating “contemporary critical principles” à la Foucault and Derrida, as instancing Kundera's “own preoccupations,” The Theatre Critic wishes there were greater difference between Diderot and Kundera, a more dialectical or theatrical relation, a wish extended to Sontag's direction. The actor questions the production's lack of “performance vitality” and “narrative energy.” Though “outnumbered,” The Literary Critic gets (more or less) the last word in praising the “seriousness” of the production.

H127 Evernden, Neil. “Seeing and Being Seen: A Response to Susan Sontag's *Essays on Photography*.” *Soundings* 68 (Spring 1985): 72–87.

Comprises an introduction and six sections. (1) *Photography as Predatory Seeing*. Takes photography as threatening an objectification of the subject or target that replaces or denies “I-thou” communication. (2) *Sight and Distance*. Compares Sontag's description of photography as “dissociative seeing” to Hans Jonas's remarks on the “objectivity” of (distanced) seeing in general. (3) *Seeing without Staring*. Cites Don Ohde and Merleau-Ponty on the intentionality of seeing and photography as confirming the possibilities for intimacy between photographer and subject. (4) *Means and Ends*. Takes Sontag's remarks on photographers who “disarm” themselves by using pre-modern equipment as allowing that intentions and encounters may vary. (5) *Subjectivity and Aesthetics*. Cites Berger on the value of context to the question whether photography is predatory or estranging; cites Ortega y Gasset (et al.) on the subjective aspect of aesthetic appreciation as confirming the possibility of an

intersubjective relation between spectator and photo. (6) *Conclusions*. Because “the fact that photography tends to function in a predatory fashion does not constitute grounds for concluding that it is essentially predatory,” A12 is “more revelatory of our society than of photography per se.”

H128 Huber, Paul. “Susan Sontag und die ‘Modernist Sensibility.’” *Schweizer Monatshefte* (Zurich) 65 (Sept. 1985):773–82.

Takes Sontag’s “modernism” as involving extreme emotional attitudes and a surrealist aesthetic. Sees her rhetoric as “hyperbolic,” leading to unresolved contradictions; sees Sontag herself as evoking the mixture of surrealism and melancholy she describes in Benjamin. For Sontag, the deliverance from melancholy lies in the “erotics” of art.

H129 Barbon, Paola. “Piscator, Sciascia und Susan Sontag: ‘Come tu mi vuoi,’ oder: Jedem seinen Pirandello.” In *Pirandello und die Naturalismus-Diskussion: Akten des II. Paderborner Pirandello-Symposiums*, edited by Johannes Thomas, 17–39. Paderborn: Ferdinand Schöningh, 1986.

Compares three interpretations of Pirandello’s *As You Desire Me*. Observes the feminist emphasis of Sontag’s (keeping Ignota always on stage, less as an empty sign of desire than as a self-determining subject); observes as well those aspects of Sontag’s staging pertaining even more obviously to her other preoccupations, photography especially.

H130 Hellmann, John. “The Antiwar Movement and the Frontier.” In *American Myth and the Legacy of Vietnam*, 71–95, 229–30. New York: Columbia Univ. Press, 1986.

Comprises four segments, the first contrasting Lyndon Johnson’s failure as a “cultural model” to John Kennedy’s success. Segment 3 contrasts the disillusioning facts of the Tet offensive with the reception of John Wayne’s *The Green Berets*, which kept faith with the “frontier” myth appealed to by JFK. Segment 4 briefly concludes by reference to the mythical blankness of the Nixon years. The chapter’s second segment discusses how Mailer, Mary McCarthy, and Sontag employed traditional frontier imagery to critique American intervention. Sees McCarthy and Sontag alike as distraught with an “ugly” technological America, each prepared (if reluctantly) to idealize or identify with the North Vietnamese, but doing so in thoroughly American terms, with “a shocked sense that Vietnam is the America that no longer exists.” Thus “Sontag, and her sympathetic readers, are ‘natural’ Americans helping native villagers against the ‘ugly’ visage of an America revealed to be a transplanted European empire.”

H131 Krupnick, Mark. “Criticism as an Institution.” In *The Crisis of Modernity: Recent Critical Theories of Culture and Society in the United States and West Germany*, edited by Gunter H.Lenz and Kurt L.Shell, 156–76. Frankfurt am Main: Campus Verlag; Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1986.

An introduction and four subheaded sections (“A Culture of Journalism,” “The Academicizing of Lionel Trilling,” “The New Sensibility and Neoconservatism,” “Edward Said and Humanism”) address the question of “intellectual style” as it serves to distinguish Frankfurt School writers (chiefly

Adorno) from their New York (and Paris) contemporaries. Takes Trilling, Sontag, and Said as “representative” New York figures. Takes Trilling’s ambivalence about modernism, the adversary culture, and the university as (oddly) prefiguring Sontag’s brief “against interpretation,” just as Sontag’s indebtedness to Adorno and Benjamin in *On Photography* evinces her eventual “reconciliation” with “high-culture intellectuals” in the face of a commodity culture. Values Sontag’s 1960s “insurgency” for requiring others (Howe, Kramer) to articulate the “New York Intellectual” position on behalf of “high seriousness” and “decency.”

H132 Louvre, Alf. “The Reluctant Historians: Sontag, Mailer and American Culture Critics in the 1960s.” *Prose Studies* 9.1 (May 1986):47–61.

Investigates the “confessional” strategies of Mailer’s *The Armies of the Night* and Sontag’s “Trip to Hanoi.” Where Mailer’s rhetoric is “inflationary,” “masturbatory,” a parody of “phallogocentric realism,” Sontag’s is “celibate” and “circular”; both employ “decentered and occasionally schizophrenic narrators,” as if to undermine the certainties of “conventional” historical discourse, though discovering the limits of discourse, even of novelistic or confessional discourse, is what makes it confessional. Though Sontag’s diaristic writing emulates the direct style of her Vietnamese hosts, her rhetoric remains reflexive, intransitive, “at odds with the Vietnamese ethos she would embrace,” though at odds, as well, with structuralist and post-structuralist thought to the extent that the “Vietnamese connotations” of words like “integrity” and “experience” exceed the logic of deconstruction or solipsism. Thus the “failure” of Mailer and Sontag to escape the actor/spectator duality provides “a salutary contrast” to “the intellectual self-assurance of ‘radical’ deconstruction.”

H133 Hambidge, Joan. “Die erotiek van lees.” *Tydskrif vir letterkunde* (Johannesburg) 24.3 (Aug. 1986):49–55.

Ponders the kinship of Sontag’s call for an “erotics of art” and Barthes’s subsequent interest in “the pleasure of the text,” a paradoxical kinship in that both employ rational discourse to urge the displacement of interpretation or rationality.

H134 Kramer, Hilton. “Anti-Communism and the Sontag Circle.” *New Criterion* 5.1 (Sept. 1986):1–7.

Takes David Rieff’s review of *Against All Hope: The Prison Memoirs of Armando Valladares* (K186) as depicting “the Sontag circle as the true and rightful custodians of intellectual anti-Communism.” Quotes Sontag’s “Trip to Hanoi” and “Some Thoughts on the Right Way (for Us) to Love the Cuban Revolution” at considerable length, as if to refute the claim that neoconservatives alone are capable of treating ideas in a “coarse and vulgar” manner. Accuses Rieff of underplaying the extent of Sontag’s “fellow-travelling,” if not his own, especially when Rieff describes the attractions of the Cuban revolution in “the language of romantic love,” as a matter of “erotics” or “aesthetics.” Concludes that neither Rieff nor Sontag has “much of a mind for politics.”

H135 Brody, Howard. "Reading Stories about Sickness." In *Stories of Sickness*, 59–65. New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 1987.

Distinguishes stories that use illness metaphorically from stories that are genuinely *about* illness and can be used (therefore) to explore concepts of sickness and self-respect. Sontag's A13 discussions of tuberculosis and cancer are praised, but she is criticized (in a footnote) for holding too strictly to "a simplistic faith in the traditional biomedical paradigm."

H136 Carroll, Noël. "Trois propositions pour une critique de la danse contemporaine." Trans. (Fr.) Alain Pratte. In *La danse au défi*, edited by Michèle Febvre, 177–88. Montreal: les éditions Parachute, 1987.

Advocates a "situational" dance criticism, by contrast with Sontag's B15 advocacy of "descriptive" criticism, which is extensively critiqued—to the effect that, while description is necessary, description for dance-historical purposes is best accomplished by film and video; to the effect that, while description is objective, other forms of commentary can also be objective; to the extent that the fantasy of unmediated transparency is "eminently contestable"; to the effect that descriptive criticism succumbs to the "fallacy of critical imitation" that justifies a formalist (modern) criticism by reference to a formalist (modern) artwork, as if only a fascist criticism were appropriate to a fascist artwork.

H137 Nelson, Gary. "Sontag, Susan." In *Thinkers of the Twentieth Century*, 2d ed., edited by Roland Turner, 718–9. Chicago: St. James Press, 1987.

Distinguishes between Sontag essays that treat a specific work or figure and essays that are "basic efforts of definition." Takes her basic tasks and themes as (heroically) resisting received opinion and (ironically) explicating the attractions of postmodern art. In her "moral urgency and camp theatricality" she epitomizes the postmodern moment.

H138 Rollyson, Carl, and Lisa Paddock. "Susan Sontag." In *Critical Survey of Literary Theory*, edited by Frank N. Magill, 1363–8. Pasadena, CA: Salem Press, 1987.

Takes B11 and B15 as defining "the territory Sontag made peculiarly her own," especially as confirming her advocacy of cinema and her critique of photography and modernity. Cites Nelson (H83) on the paradox by which the objects described in Sontag's criticism are (interpretively) absent, hence all the more desirable, as explaining the success of her criticism and the "comparative failure" of her fiction. Takes A13 as confirming the wisdom of A2, to the effect that "Links between consciousness and the phenomenal world are illusory."

H139 Howard, Richard. "A Description of 'Description (of a Description).'" In *Facing Texts: Encounters between Contemporary Writers and Critics*, edited by Heide Ziegler, 144–50. Durham: Duke Univ. Press, 1988.

Takes C10 as "the mirroring of writing by itself," as a Barthesian de-scription (cutting the italic text into lexemes) and ad-scription (as the roman text comments on its italic twin). Takes the italic in-scription or pre-scription as raising issues of priority and identity, of a-scription, which the story's final paragraph both closes off and accelerates, to the extent that both texts raise the

issue of experience and its fallible relationship to knowledge. Comments on Sontag's use of aphorism, language suspended between poetry and prose, as characterizing her modernist practice; takes the italic text, indeed, as a fragment (then fragmented) from Nietzsche, as if art, memory, textuality, were the script that allows for errantry and for "otherness exacerbated into selfhood."

H140 Jeffords, Susan. "Susan Sontag." In *Modern American Critics since 1955*, Dictionary of Literary Biography, Vol. 67, edited by Gregory S. Jay, 268–75. Detroit: Gale Research, 1988.

Adduces "Against Interpretation" as the key to Sontag's project, regardless of genre; in her studies of multimedia artists, in her own mix of film and fiction and essay. Takes her "phenomenology" as intra- or anti-categorical, life seen from the inside, *as* experience, à la Hippolyte and Diddy—especially in view of the way "interpretation" and "style" (later, illness metaphors) are historical constructs. Takes "silence" and "pornography" as anti-hermeneutical instances of existential "will"; reads *On Photography* as (ambivalently) continuous with Sontag's advocacy of transparency. Compares Sontag to the New Critics; concludes that her project is too modern, too autobiographical, to fit the New Critical model.

H141 Pirè, Luciana. "Un transito nel moderno: L'empio di Susan Sontag." *Contesti* (Bari) No. 1 (1988):179–97.

Charts Sontag's "journey to modernism" via Barthes, Baudelaire—modernism seen as "the transitory, the fugitive, the contingent," as opposed to an inert and superficial avant-gardism. Sees "camp" as Sontag's main contribution to modernist discourse, as a matter of bold posturing, of using the past as resource in the existential present, as a means of exemplifying (defying) suffering, via "style." Notes Sontag's balancing act between literature and philosophy, language and silence; compares her to Saul Bellow, especially by reference to A14. Adduces A15 in closing, as confirming Sontag's allegiance to Barthes, to modernism as "a morality of form."

H142 Griffin, Paul F. "Susan Sontag, Franny Phelan, and the Moral Implications of Photographs." *Midwest Quarterly* 29 (Winter 1988): 194–203.

Takes William Kennedy's *Ironwood* as refuting Sontag's A12 claim that photographs (per Griffin) "stop time and history" by fragmenting context, thus anesthetizing moral judgments. Takes Franny Phelan's attempt to expiate guilt through exile as enacting what Sontag would call "a connoisseur's relation" to the world, a matter both of distance and (ethical) order—a relation Franny's reading of a photograph reveals as false, false because there is no "absolute moral code," false also because the contingency of the photograph means that "anything can happen next" depending upon the local context of the reader, where immediate human relationships provide moral compass enough.

H143 Warburton, Nigel. "Photographic Communication." *British Journal of Aesthetics* 28 (Spring 1988):173–81.

Disputes the A12 claim that photography can "never be ethical or political knowledge" by reference to Ross (H100) and Neil Postman. Disputes the view

that photographs “cannot reveal change over time”; multiple or extended exposures, for instance, are commonplace. Also argues that even a punctual frame implies a narrative dimension, a before and after, as is confirmed by the practices of picture editing and by the fact that photographs are always *used* in particular contexts, often as “illocutionary acts” à la Wittgenstein and Barthes.

H144 Best, Steven. “After the Catastrophe: Postmodernism and Hermeneutics.” *Canadian Journal of Political and Social Theory* 12.3 (Fall 1988):87–100.

Comprises four subheaded sections. Attacks the anti-interpretive bias of postmodernism and poststructuralism as asserting an “unbridgeable chasm between modernity and postmodernity.” Section 2 (“Postmodernism and the Critique of Hermeneutics”) describes Sontag as antirealist, for rejecting depth models of understanding. Though Sontag attacks reductionist dogmas in B15, her attack on interpretation is itself reductionist and Romantic for evading *how* a text is produced and “how textual form is itself a type of ‘content.’” Takes the depthless quality of much postmodern culture as symptomatic of “a crisis in representation” that requires all the more a hermeneutic approach capable of “mapping” (à la Jameson) the “totality of social relations and networks hidden below the axiomatic and gleaming surfaces of everyday life.”

H145 Duperray, Max. “*Dernier recours*: L’apocalypse intimiste de Susan Sontag: Pour un fantastique de fin de partie.” *Europe* (Paris) No. 707 (Mar. 1988):114–23.

Draws heavily upon McCaffery (H70) to elaborate the generic affiliations of *Dernier recours* (A3g), as oscillating between gothic or fantastic literature and novelistic realism. Takes madness as troping how the kinship of the everyday and the fantastic instances a rhetoric of substitution and interpretation. Invokes Baudrillard on the link between the accidental and the irrational, between the “operatic” and the “operational,” on the way the “signifying chain links people and objects in a supernatural coherence” like that on view in the novel’s chanel house conclusion. Describes the “scopic metaphor” in A3g as the experience of lack, of tunnels, of cavities, of feminine spaces giving birth to both life and death. Compares the lost manuscript of Diddy’s “Wolf Man” story to A3g; each requires a process of reconstruction, inversion. Takes the impossibility of reality as instancing its kinship to the irrational and the mechanical, as that which, in seeking knowledge, turns beings into (dead) things.

H146 Lash, Scott. “Discourse or Figure? Postmodernism as a ‘Regime of Signification.’” *Theory, Culture and Society* 5 (June 1988): 311–36.

Comprises an introduction and four subheaded sections. Urges “that cultural modernization is a process of differentiation and autonomization and that postmodernism is a process of de-differentiation and implosion.” If the former distinguishes “aesthetic forms from the real world,” “fact from value,” then postmodernism de-differentiates by transgressing the boundary “between literature and theory, between high and popular culture,” between signifier and signified, between meaning and reference, etc. Adduces Sontag’s call for an erotics of art

(under the first subhead: “Sensation versus Interpretation”) as instancing what Lyotard would call a “figural” (vs. a “discursive”) “regime of signification.” To the extent that Sontag’s Nietzschean “aesthetics of affirmation” depicts analysis as a “supplement to art and art a supplement to life,” her early work anticipates Lyotard’s (anti-Lacanian) advocacy of a “primary process” postmodern figurality by which image opposes narrative, mobility opposes regularity, etc.

H147 Grissemann, Stefan “Advokaten der Oberfläche.” *Film Video Logbuch* (Vienna) No. 20–21 (Dec. 1988):22–5.

Surveys “advocates” of the cinematic “surface”—Sontag, Barthes, Deren, Godard, Virilio—to the explicit exclusion of “professional” film theorists. Praises A2 for its personal, nonspecialist, “process”-oriented film criticism, which values sci-fi equally with Bresson, aesthetic effects as much as interpretable meaning.

H148 Ignatieff, Michael. “Modern Dying.” *New Republic*, 26 Dec. 1988, 28–33.

Takes A13 and A20b as advocating a metaphorless stoicism and as defending classical (disease-specific) medicine, though Sontag “ought to have said more” about “the metaphors that govern our encounters with doctors,” especially in view of claims made for a narrative understanding of illness (see H135). Pays particular attention to the metaphors of “struggle” and “responsibility,” which indicate the extent to which “the modern world does not...have a vernacular of fate”—hence the sense of “injustice” that follows when the narrative of “self-mastery” is cut short.

H149 Manske, Eva. “Eine Erotik der Kunst: Erkundungen einer kulturellen Landschaft: Zur Essayistik Susan Sontags.” In *Geist als Leidenschaft: Ausgewählte Essays zur modernen Kunst und Kultur*, edited by Eva Manske, 248–61. Leipzig: Gustav KiepenheuerVerlag, 1989. See A21.

Takes the “intimacy” of Sontag’s preoccupation with the intersection of death, dreams, and reality, especially in *Death Kit*, as a key to all of her writing, an oeuvre providing the “new forms of experience” that her critical essays assert all art should provide. Praises Sontag’s responsiveness to cultural, political, and personal experiences—to the Vietnam War in *Trip to Hanoi*, to cancer in *Illness as Metaphor*. Because Sontag straddles both the “old and the new world”—though opposed to a predominant modernism, Sontag is an advocate of modernism—her work subsumes all the political and aesthetic “isms” of the postmodern period.

H150 Ray, Laurence J. “AIDS as a Moral Metaphor: An Analysis of the Politics of the ‘Third Epidemic.’” *Archives européennes de sociologie* 30 (1989):243–73.

Comprises an introduction and four segments. (1) *Illness as metaphor*. Distinguishes among etiologies of disease; though the “prevalence” or provenance of disease is largely social, modern medicine and culture tend (pathologically) to individualize and moralize disease. Against A13’s claim that the individualization of disease follows from ignorance, AIDS demonstrates (à la

Foucault) that increased knowledge “has not obviously led to a diminution of the metaphoric language which surrounds it.” Likewise, despite Sontag’s prediction that AIDS will be de-dramatized, as one apocalyptic threat among the many, its “special quality of being charged with sexualised meanings” marks it as a major site of cultural struggle. (2) *AIDS and the “New Right.”* Adduces complexities in Sontag’s view of AIDS (as itself a construct) as figuring traditionalist confusions of private morality and public welfare, of causes and symptoms, through which the AIDS=gay plague metaphor both contains and (via displacement) expresses preexisting and only partially conscious cultural tensions—as against the literary view of metaphor as a matter of conscious renaming. (3) *AIDS and Africa.* Elaborates (European) representations of AIDS in (or as from) Africa as evidence that science is not immune to projections of “otherness.” (4) *Metaphor and maturity.* Suggests that A20a “fails to capture the broader social and political forces that gather around” AIDS because illness is “symbolically and socially” ordered, typically in terms of “known” or “traditionalist” (hence non-rational, even unconscious) values, a “level not addressed by Sontag’s metaphor/knowledge dichotomy,” though her description of blame as “infantile” suggests a hope of more mature and enlightened responses to AIDS.

H151 Kobasa, Suzanne C.Ouellette. “Sontag on AIDS.” *Social Policy* 19.3 (Winter 1989):60–3.

Comprises an introduction and four subheaded sections. Describes A20b as confirming A13’s brief against metaphor via two test cases, one a man living out the “myth” that character determines illness, the other a woman haunted by myth-induced shame. *A Book That Had to Be Written.* Notes how A20b exceeds expectation in describing how and why AIDS metaphors have cultural force. *The AIDS Metaphors.* Lists views of AIDS (as enemy, teleology, decomposition, plague, apocalypse) that A20b critiques. *Beyond Metaphors.* Elaborates Sontag’s analysis of the (capitalist, first world, apocalyptic) conditions under which AIDS metaphors thrive. *Critical Reaction.* Takes negative reactions as measuring the high expectations awaiting A20b, while praising Sontag’s refusal to ignore the fear and suffering that attend the disease.

H152 Grover, J.Z. [Jan Zita.] “Speaking of AIDS: Language as Exorcism.” *San Francisco Review of Books* 13.4 (Spring 1989):15–8.

Comprises four unnumbered sections. (1) Adduces differences among recent AIDS books as confirming that “AIDS is as much a creature of language as it is of biology.” (2) Notes how A20b’s arguments, as derived from A13, were already “part of the [discursive] terrain” even before the book saw print. Describes two problems with Sontag’s views: that her brief against metaphor can only ever be an appeal for a different “style” of medical discourse, and that this emphasis on style overvalues the role of language, at the expense of “more primary” meanings or experiences. Takes A20b as limited in emphasizing the official discourse on AIDS. (3) Adduces Emmanuel Dreuilhe’s *Mortal Embrace* as also limited, in being “purely personal.” (4) Praises the work of Richard Goldsby and Mary Catherine Bateson as having overcome the “us versus them”

distinction [A20b](#) allegedly relies on by emphasizing the larger social context in which AIDS sufferers suffer as much from economic as medical debilities.

H153 Koestenbaum, Wayne. "Immunities." *Yale Review* 78 (Spring 1989): 466–71.

Addresses the paradox by which Sontag's [A20b](#) attack on AIDS metaphors is "itself a fraught metaphor of our desire to find a final *something* in her words." Considers the marketing and rhetoric of [A20b](#)—the assumption of a "civilized" audience, of a generalises relationship to specialist discourse—though the decorousness of her rhetoric is "troubling" when "chronicling gay men and their 'practices.'" Finally applauds the "formalism" of [A20b](#) as a helpfully "defensive act," especially in view of what others have written about AIDS.

H154 McLemee, Scott. "On Demythologizing AIDS." *New Politics*, n.s., 2.3 (Summer 1989):170–6.

Comprises five unnumbered segments. (1) Takes [A20b](#) as continuous with [A13](#) in urging a depoliticizing of disease by disavowing the metaphors that enable disease to function as political rhetoric. (2) Observes how the plague/AIDS equation draws on secondhand (literary) experiences, the connotations of which predetermine discussion and encourage scapegoating. (3) Notes how Sontag's argument that *all* disease ought to be considered as biological—despite her acknowledgment of the racist quality of speculations about the African origins of AIDS—cuts against the historicist logic typically invoked to counter racism. (4) Takes Sontag's discussion of AIDS as figuring "the imagination of disaster" and the nostalgia-inducing globalization of experience as revealing "how thorough a job the metaphors of disease do in expressing" the otherwise un(der)expressed. (5) Takes Sontag's attempts to undo the body/society metaphor as complicit with common sense to the extent that she ignores how thoroughly metaphorical even medical understandings of disease may be, hence undervalues efforts to transvalue the language of health in the service of a "liberating rhetoric" of tolerance.

H155 Miller, D.A. "Sontag's Urbanity." *October* No. 49 (Summer 1989):91–101.

Comprises four unnumbered segments. (1) Takes Sontag's "valorization of writing" in defending [A20b](#) as enforcing a distance of form and content that participates in the "AIDS panic" she ostensibly opposes. (2) Laments a consistency of attitude between the "phobic de-homosexualization of Camp" in [B11](#) and Sontag's distanced and "urbane" descriptions of gay men in [A20b](#), given that the "tyranny of AIDS" is enforced by a "poetics" that justifies and activates homophobia. (3) Takes Sontag's desire to avoid interpretation, to "retire" harmful metaphors, as allowing her to identify writing with neutrality and thereby to occlude the way her own language employs "phobic metaphors" in depicting AIDS as metaphorically justifying the aesthetic consolations of high modernist culture. (4) Accordingly, it is "precisely its *refusal* to take itself as writing" that allows [A20b](#) "to reinforce the very tendencies in the figuration of AIDS—the homophobia, racism, and cultural conservatism—that it otherwise

might have more successfully challenged.” Takes her urging that military metaphors be “retired” as denying those “fighting” AIDS “the right to speak of themselves” except as victims in need of consolation.

H155a “Sontag’s Urbanity.” In *The Lesbian and Gay Studies Reader*, edited by Henry Abelove, Michèle Aina Barale, and David M. Halperin, 212–20. New York: Routledge, 1993.

H156 Sayres, Sohny. “Susan Sontag and the Practice of Modernism.” *American Literary History* 1 (Fall 1989):593–611.

Adduces Trilling’s “The Fate of Pleasure” as setting the scene for Sontag’s investigation of the postwar modernist “sensibility.” Describes the dialogic “terms” of Sontag’s “discourse” in eight subheaded segments and a coda.

(1) *Epigrammatical Mode*. Sontag writes in epigrams, rendering “what is experienced as a paradox” in which “meanings turn in on themselves, values reverse, and the only worthy gestures are the disruptive ones.” Though Sontag (like some of her characters) “aches for simpler truths,” she uses the epigram to escape “the burden” of enlightenment. (2) *On Silences*. Epigrams are pleasurable for the way “they outline the silence of what they do not speak,” allowing space and time for reflection. Like Blanchot or Duras, Sontag uses this silence (in “Unguided Tour”) to “restrain” and “protect” the self, though that silence also condemns her as a “collaborator.” (3) *Spirit of Negation*. Sontag locates the power of modernist art “in its power to negate,” a power (Sayres takes Sontag to imply) becoming ever more mechanically disseminated and politically tenuous, though as a “myth” (of silence, of emptiness) it retains a sense of undeniable “pathos.” (4) *Pathos of Heroes*. The “impertinence” of Sontag’s youthful devotion to epigrams gives way in later essays to a hazily retrospective admiration of the modernist’s (tragic) gift for “endurance.” (5) *Ethics*. High modernism ennobles itself and its opposite via the dialectic of negation, while later modernism turns negativity into negativism, thus overriding or draining significance, a fate Sontag’s novels allegorically embody, or exhaust. (6) *The Authentic Moral Spirit*. Because authentic morality “does not compromise with the world,” and because the disburdenment of deletion can seem such a compromise, the modernist is forced to negate “the authorities and conventions generating from [her] own work.” The wall Sontag builds around modernity may be designed as much to contain as to buttress its creeds. (7) *Politics*. Sontag’s political gestures (her Hanoi trip) focus less on history than on “categorical struggles within herself.” The risk in so attending to the “style” of one’s “radical will” is that of “the aestheticization of life”—which she critiques in *On Photography*. (8) *Melancholic Allegorist*. Sees Sontag’s Benjamin-inspired fascination with allegorical *Trauerspiel* as expressing a desire for redemption from the “void” of self-negation, if only by equating a desolate self with a desolate scene. *Coda*. Admits that “Sontag deserves a wider, livelier appreciation,” in view of her intellectual and writerly accomplishments, which are too easily

overlooked in watching “for her political fumbles”—despite the Sontag-authorized conviction that her efforts are all of a piece (“Everything I write is fiction”), as if Sayres’s “terms” were really Sontag’s.

*H156a* “Key Terms.” In *Susan Sontag: The Elegiac Modernist*, 44–59, 150. New York: Routledge, 1990.  
A slightly revised version of [H156](#), though it lacks most of the [H156](#) coda. (See [I10a](#) for further elaboration.)

*H157* Scull, Andrew. “Mortal Meanings.” *TLS*, 10–16 Mar. 1989, 239–40.

Critiques Sander Gilman’s *Disease and Representation* and [A20a](#), the latter as “strained and overdrawn.” Takes Sontag’s brief against the AIDS fatalism of the medical establishment as “misplaced” for implying that early detection implies discrimination; takes her brief against describing AIDS as a plague as inconsistent with her own descriptions. Takes her criticism of Stephen Jay Gould as self-contradictory, in that he employs the kind of neutral language she otherwise advocates. Adduces Alzheimer’s as counterfactual to Sontag’s claim that face-deforming diseases arouse the most dread.

*H158* Branham, Robert. “Speaking Itself: Susan Sontag’s Town Hall Address.” *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 75 (Aug. 1989):259–76.

Takes [B67c](#) as an “exemplary instance of the rhetorical strategy of contextual reconstruction” by means of “the self-referential discussion in a text of the text and its rhetorical situation.” Adduces the rhetoric of Sontag’s cultural criticism—her [B15](#) attack on interpretation—as confirmation. Yet Sontag’s effort to “transcend” rhetorical constraints by “naming” them was unsuccessful, to judge by the well-documented response. Takes Sontag’s efforts to have been “undermined” by “conflicting statements of purpose and problem” that confuse rhetorical and political action, by “stylistic cues” linking her speech (accurately or not) to the recantation rhetoric of the McCarthy era, and by interpretations that took the talk “as part of a larger contemporary campaign against the left” known as “Cold War Liberalism.”

*H159* Mileur, Jean-Pierre. “Fables of Critical Identity.” In *The Critical Romance: The Critic as Reader, Writer, Hero*, 127–201, 226–30. Madison: Univ. of Wisconsin Press, 1990.

Claims criticism “is a late Romantic literary genre, a distinctive form of the romance” in which the critic is the “hero of his own writing.” Follows Derrida and Lévi-Strauss to the margin, where philosophy touches linguistic contingency, where the “responsible” anthropologist begins to look like the self-indulgent traveler, where the borderline “equi-vocation” of each recoils from yet echoes the equivocation (as between observation and creation) of the literary critic, whose language both is and is not his own.

“Against Interpretation” ([B15](#)) and “The Anthropologist as Hero” ([B6](#)) are discussed at length at the borderline between discussions of Derrida and Lévi-Strauss because they embody so clearly the paradoxical conflict between self-

effacement and self-assertion. Attests to the general accuracy of Sontag's description of interpretation while remarking its partiality, in its neglect of romantic critics (a neglect expressive of Sontag's *own* status as a Romantic), in its failure to escape the Platonic problematic. While condemning the mimetic or instrumental emphasis on "content" deriving from Plato, she echoes his critique of imitation in her attack "against interpretation" for establishing "a shadow world" that (shades of the *pharmakon*) "poisons our sensibilities." This mimetic attack on mimesis is all the more ironic in view of Sontag's praise for the "institutionalized" if not scientific "alienation" of the Lévi-Straussian anthropological hero that cures itself by repeating itself systematically: "What is surprising, especially in light of her remark that it may be necessary to exacerbate our alienation in order to cure it, is that she does not recognize in the alienating distance of the act of interpretation a similar 'ethical psychotherapy' and a similar necrology."

H160 Papoulis, Irene. "How 'Interpretation' Can Disempower Students: Learning from Susan Sontag." *CEA Forum* 20.1–2 (1990): 13–5.

Urges Sontag's B15 critique of interpretation-as-decoding, her advocacy of attending to form and to sensory experience, as antidote to the undergraduate desire for "nutshell" knowledge.

H161 Showalter, Elaine. "The Way We Write Now: Syphilis and AIDS." In *Sexual Anarchy: Gender and Culture at the Fin de Siècle*, 188–208, 230–3. New York: Viking Penguin, 1990.

Contrasts end-of-the-nineteenth-century constructions of syphilis (as anonymous and secretive, as masculine) and AIDS (as public and political, as homosexual). Contrasts Dominique Fernandez's apocalyptic depiction of AIDS in *La Gloire de Paria* to the more socially and personally hopeful picture on view in "The Way We Live Now."

H162 Wiseman, Susan. "'Femininity' and the Intellectual in Sontag and Cixous." In *The Body and the Text: Hélène Cixous, Reading and Teaching*, edited by Helen Wilcox et al., 98–113. New York: Harvester/Wheatsheaf, 1990.

Comprises an introduction and three subheaded sections. Uses Sontag's genderless writing to map Cixous's "slippages" between constructivist and essentialist definitions of femininity. (1) "When We Use a Master Discourse?" Observes the contradictions between Sontag's independent persona and her academic audience. Though "she is clearly situated *within* the academy," she writes as an "I"; though her "I" is typically ungendered, her photographed (female) body is always on the cover. Critiques the "binary" moralism implicit in Sontag's abstract desire for a transcendent (vs. a contaminated) language as complicit with the repressiveness by which the (pure) male-world oppresses the (impure) female-world. Takes the ostensibly confessional authenticity of "Trip to Hanoi" as masking yet depending upon Sontag's status as an elite and isolated "intellectual." (2) "If the Position of Mastery Culturally Comes Back to Men?" Confirms the proposition that femininity is "the repressed of Sontag's text" by noting how responses to her "Town Hall" renunciation of communism employed

a sexualized discourse of “fashion and femininity” to impugn Sontag’s status as a political sophisticate. (3) *Desire, the Imaginary, Class-Struggle—How Do They Relate?* Though Cixous overtly questions sexual categories, replacing “man” and “woman” with “masculine” and “feminine,” she, like Sontag, eschews materiality by locating the “economy” of gender within the text. Though Sontag is not a dissident à la Kristeva, she *does*, in her efforts to maintain binary distinctions, “acknowledge the power of the *social* category of the feminine” in ways Cixous elides.

H163 Michie, Helena. “A Few Words about AIDS.” *American Literary History* 2 (Summer 1990):328–38.

Emphasizes the distinction between narrative and nonnarrative representations of illness, a choice Sontag made in A13 when she decided not to tell her cancer story, as if to deprive metaphor of its power. Describes *Thinking AIDS* by Mary Catherine Bateson and Richard Goldsby as using a nonnarrative yet still metaphorical rhetoric that anthropomorphizes AIDS and heteromorphizes gays, sacrificing “difference” so as to argue for similarity before the law. By contrast, Randy Shilts (in *And the Band Played On*) relentlessly specifies the differences, of gay from straight, of factions within the gay-male community, if finally for the purpose of suggesting deeper identities and identifications. Takes A20b as differing in not differing. Sontag’s nonnarrative rhetoric, that is, consists largely of self-quotation, repeating formulations from A13 as if to say that AIDS has changed nothing, that the old “ideas” or categories are still good. Storytelling might have helped.

H164 Kennedy, Liam. “Precocious Archaeology: Susan Sontag and the Criticism of Culture.” *Journal of American Studies* 24 (Apr. 1990):23–39.

Comprises three segments, all of language derived from I20. (1) Takes Sontag as an “archaeologist” in her concern for “dominant cultural discourses” and as “precocious” for being “always sceptical,” hence her lack of followers, hence also her ambivalent relationship to structuralism and poststructuralism. (2) Sees Sontag’s “against interpretation” stance as contesting “the nature and authority of the names and meanings forced on art and on experience” by a universalizing “humanism.” Though Sontag’s “dialectical” concern with cultural antinomies “shows clear parallels with poststructuralist theorizing” and evinces a Hegelian “avowal of negation,” she also “refuses to give way to the play of difference as an end in itself.” Discusses “Notes on ‘Camp’” and “Simone Weil” as instancing the contingency and particularity of cultural signifiers; notes that “transgression” is for Sontag a phase of the dialectical or phenomenological process that provides “a potential ‘access to some truth’” and by which selfhood is “constituting as well as constituted.” Compares Sontag’s B6 critique of Lévi-Strauss’s professionalized (formalist, structuralist) detachment with her B37 analysis of her (confessional) American “self” and her insistently “material” Vietnamese other(s). Describes “Project for a Trip to China” as also balancing the articulation and the arrogation of difference. Takes her use of “Disjunctive forms” as a phenomenological and “formal response to the limits of

interpretation” and as “an ironic acknowledgment of the artifice of critical writing.” (3) Notes how Sontag’s nontotalizing view of transgression differs from Foucault’s “dispersion of man” philosophy.

H165 Shusterman, Richard. “Beneath Interpretation: Against Hermeneutic Holism.” *Monist* 73 (Apr. 1990):181–204.

Argues that conflating understanding with interpretation erases the distinction between “conscious thinking” and the “prereflective” and “non-discursive background” upon which consciousness operates. Distinguishes his own critique of interpretation from Sontag’s by reference to Danto (K142). Takes B15 as privileging “one interpretive form” over others and as confused on four accounts: (1) rejection of the content/form distinction assumes “that form itself has no content,” (2) praising the work “as it is” presumes “some foundational” and “transparently” graspable textual identity, (3) praise of form as “liberatingly erotic” ignores the sense in which form is “paradigmatically intellectual and constraining,” and (4) advocating formalism over interpretation fails to recognize that formal analysis is already “a recognized form of interpretation” applied to surface features as opposed to implicit or deep meaning.

H165a “Beneath Interpretation.” In *The Interpretive Turn: Philosophy, Science, Culture*, edited by David R.Hiley, James F.Bohman, and Richard Shusterman, 102–28. Ithaca: Cornell Univ. Press, 1991.

Revises H165, rewriting “hermeneutic holism” as “hermeneutic universalism.”

H165b “Beneath Interpretation.” In *Pragmatist Aesthetics: Living Beauty, Rethinking Art*, 115–35, 283–8. Cambridge, MA: Blackwell, 1992.

Reprints H165a, somewhat abbreviated.

\*H166 Azcona-Cranwell, Elizabeth. “Susan Sontag contra las metáforas del SIDA.” *Suplemento-Literario-La-Nacion* (Buenos Aires), 1 July 1990, 1–2.

Though it is listed in the *MLA International Bibliography*, we have repeatedly failed to acquire this item.

H167 Schor, Esther H. “Susan Sontag.” In *Modern American Women Writers*, edited by Elaine Showalter, Lea Baechler, and A.Walton Litz, 471–84. New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, Maxwell Macmillan International; Toronto: Collier Macmillan Canada, 1991.

Ponders Sontag’s “Emersonian” career by reference to her “four personae.” *Critic*. Takes “On Style” as initiating a dialogue “between aesthetics and ideology.” Compares the equivocations of *Trip to Hanoi* to Sontag’s more forthright critique of sexism in “The Third World of Women.” *Experimentalist*. Takes Sontag’s call for an antihumanist aesthetic in “The Pornographic Imagination” as a key to her novels. Prefers “the subtlety and urbanity” of *The*

*Benefactor* to the “drab, flat, and crude” analysis of “a metaphysics of disintegration” in *Death Kit*. Sees “the Brechtian revelation of fictive contraptions” occurring “more swiftly and elegantly” in Sontag’s short stories than in her novels. *Breaker of Images*. Discusses A12, A13, and A20b as pondering “the history of images, their career in our culture, and the way we live among them.” The ubiquitous “surrealism” of photography undercuts its democratizing potential; by the same token, moralized mythologies of disease are themselves potentially immoral in their capacity to oppress the already afflicted. Defends A20b against charges of tactlessness, though is troubled by Sontag’s urging that AIDS be treated as an “ordinary” illness. *Spiritualist*. Notes the “displacements of religion” in Sontag’s critical rhetoric, her longing (in B28) for “total consciousness” despite the frustrating “mediacy” of art and language, hence her repeated identifications with suffering writers and her concern for the act of writing, with “modernism as a spiritual project.”

H168 McRobbie, Angela. “The Modernist Style of Susan Sontag.” *Feminist Review* No. 38 (Summer 1991):1–19.

Comprises six subheaded segments. *Situating Sontag*. Links “the woman and the work” via book-jacket photos of Sontag; takes her weak connection to feminism as reflecting how, “in high or late European modernism—the broad conceptual umbrella for Sontag’s work—there was no critical place for women unless they demonstrably transcended gender.” Takes Sontag’s formalist reading strategies and loyalty to the “high modernist or avant-gardist canon” as asserting detachment from “more popular modes of writing and reviewing” and as explaining her “uneasy place in the new radical humanities.” Pictures Sontag’s modernism as deeply ambivalent about “those artistic and cultural forms identified directly with postmodernity” (and with America, especially Hollywood).

*Against Interpretation/Styles of Radical Will*. Takes B15 and B17 together as instancing the postmodern tenet that “realism,” far from being the end of art or interpretation, “is a specific generic construct.” Takes her A2b repudiation of Lukács in favor of Lévi-Strauss as of a piece with Sontag’s high-modernist emphasis on the autonomy and impersonality of the mind. Takes B11 and B30 as exemplifying Sontag’s problematic relationship to popular culture; though Sontag hints at awarding high culture approval to lit-marginal forms, both camp and pornography have “defected” to the postmodern mainstream, making it “difficult for Sontag to develop this interest in popular culture in her later work.”

*Under the Sign of Saturn*. Takes Sontag’s identificatory essays on recalcitrant and isolated writers (Artaud, Canetti, etc.) as permitting a “knitting together” of Sontag’s “major concerns.” Her description of Walter Benjamin as (McRobbie’s words) “somebody who only fleetingly connects with other individuals but who inhabits a not entirely unhappy world of his own construction” is especially resonant with Sontag’s modernism. Her essay on Syberberg’s *Hitler* also exhibits an enthusiastic advocacy of yet another “antirealist” modern artist—even if, on McRobbie’s reading, he could just as well be seen in postmodern terms.

*On Photography*. Takes the “antirealist strand” of A12a as the most important, in view of photography’s “seductively easy transparency.” Sees Sontag’s critique of Arbus as exemplifying the view that photography and modernity are cognates, though in her linking of photography and capitalism Sontag finally “propels us into the postmodern world.” *Illness/Aids*. Contrasts the passion and learning of A13c with the “coolness” of A20a; details the gay critique of the latter. *Conclusion*. Despite “damning criticism” of Sontag as “an élitist, Eurocentric aesthete,” the “cultural theory” paradigm in which “everything goes” evidences its own “degree of bad faith” on questions of cultural value, comes near to the anti-intellectualism that Sontag has consistently opposed.

H169 Wood, James. “The Great Interpreter.” *Guardian* (Manchester), 28 Mar. 1991, 24.

Describes Sontag as seeking to speak “the language of artists” or artworks, to be the voice in which a text “interprets itself.” Takes this paradox—as it involves alienation from academic and/or postmodernist discourse—as “*The theme*, overt or glancing, of most of her essays.”

H170 Dawid, Annie. “The Way We Teach Now: Three Approaches to AIDS Fiction.” In *AIDS: The Literary Response*, edited by Emmanuel S. Nelson, 197–203, 218. New York: Twayne Publishers, Maxwell Macmillan International; Toronto: Maxwell Macmillan Canada, 1992.

Contrasts the pedagogical implications of three AIDS short stories, C12 among them. Notes how the “chain of death” narrational style frightened student readers, how the less-than-perfect characters challenged (rather than reassured).

H171 Annan, Gabriele. “A Moral Tale.” *New York Review of Books*, 13 Aug. 1992, 3–6.

Ponders the intertextual affiliations of *The Volcano Lover* in light of its “Romance” subtitle and endlessly erupting central metaphor. Takes Sontag’s psychology as owing less to Freud than to La Rochefoucauld and La Bruyère; the narrative as owing less to Alexander Korda than to Constance Giglioli. Takes Sontag as admiring her central characters while critiquing their cult of mutual admiration, especially by allowing four women characters to have the last (ironic) words. Pays special attention to the novel’s aesthetic and operatic intertexts (Mozart, Puccini, Goethe, etc.) as a means of elucidating its fable and self-consciousness, of critiquing Sontag’s own elitism, and of praising Sontag’s writerly risk-taking, which “pays off because she moves so fast and has such a light and casual touch with language.”

H172 Bawer, Bruce. “That Sontag Woman.” *New Criterion* 11.1 (Sept. 1992): 30–7.

Describes Sontag’s “particular brand of cultural elitism” at considerable length; takes A28, in its tone and obtrusive narrational perspective, in its avid collection of aphorisms and art objects, as “entirely reminiscent of Sontag’s essays.” Takes the “romance” of A28 to include Sontag’s “own long-standing romances” with “high culture and populist revolution”; like Hawthorne, Sontag employs romance to link (premodern) past and (postmodern) present, to

(ironically) compare heroism then and heroism now. Despite the possibility that Sontag's multiple narrators may represent her own "internal conflict" between connoisseurship and populism, the book's concluding invitation to equate Eleanora Fonseca di Pimentel with Sontag reveals, at least, a "lamentable self-centeredness."

H173 Jenkyns, Richard. "Eruptions." *New Republic*, 7–14 Sept. 1992, 46–9.

Describes *The Volcano Lover* as "a big disappointment" in that its "fluctuation of tone" or voices or eras "suggests not depth or complexity, but uncertainty and a lack of control." Takes the "sporadic" depiction of Sir William Hamilton as leaving "a hole at the heart of the novel," as if Sontag were "less interested in her characters than in striking attitudes toward them," especially Lord Nelson, the depiction of whom is merely "vulgar." Scores Sontag's prose and authorial commentary as often "wrong or silly." Praises especially the Mrs. Cadogan monologue, while decrying Eleonora Pimentel's reference to Sontag as much too self-insistent.

H174 Johnson, Alexandra. "Romance as Metaphor." *Nation*, 5 Oct. 1992, 365–8.

Takes *The Volcano Lover* as collecting, displaying, and/or touring Sontag's "own succession of desires" and themes ("the primacy of aesthetics, the totalitarian impulse to sacrifice intellectuals, the moral role of art in history"). Takes Sontag's skillful evocation of "the eighteenth century's elegantly aphoristic novel of ideas" as achieving "the 'transparence' she cites as the hallmark of true art," especially when Sontag turns her "ironic eye" on the "sexual politics" of courtly love. Praises Sontag's narrational ability to make "history itself a living character" by locating "the political in the telling specifics of character," thus to evoke "both our sympathy and our horror at her protagonists' monstrous self-absorption," and to confirm "the lesson of 'Against Interpretation': the ultimate uniqueness of an object, feeling or person." In its concern for "the shifting nature of perceptions," as between "experience and memory," as between the decorous and the disturbing, A28 "seems a novel Susan Sontag was destined to write."

H175 Esonwanne, Uzoma. "Feminist Theory and the Discourse of Colonialism." In *Reimagining Women: Representations of Women in Culture*, edited by Shirley Neuman and Glennis Stephenson, 233–55. Toronto: Univ. of Toronto Press, 1993.

Examines the complexities and complicities of the use of racist and colonialist metaphors to engage questions of gender. Where Cixous figures "woman" as the "Dark Continent," at the risk of retaining an (essentialist) concept of (self-) "possession," Sontag figures woman as (living in a) "Third World," at the risk of making sexuality itself an imperial category that reduces (class) differences to sameness.

H176 Frank, Marcie. "The Critic as Performance Artist: Susan Sontag's Writing and Gay Cultures." In *Camp Grounds: Style and Homosexuality*, edited by David Bergman, 173–84. Amherst: Univ. of Massachusetts Press, 1993.

Cites Miller's H155 critique of A20b, as a "literary performance," as the key to Sontag's paradoxically "anti-theatrical" and (arguably) "homophobic" sensibility; takes the shift from "sensibility" to "ideology" evident in "Fascinating Fascism" as coherent with the view of criticism as (autobiographical) performance already adumbrated in B11. Argues that Sontag "misappropriates" Wilde, because her "sympathetic" performance/ description of Camp is authorized only by her "revulsion" for it, as if too "wholehearted" an appreciation of camp amounts to a morally questionable form of exhibitionism. Takes the moral critique of fascism as Camp (of Camp as fascism) in B50 as a post-Stonewall attempt to reassert "the scruples of high seriousness," as if by "sensibility" Sontag means a "gay performance" that needs "ideological correction by moral inoculation."

H177 Warner, Sharon Oard. "The Way We Write Now: The Reality of AIDS in Contemporary Short Fiction." *Studies in Short Fiction* 30 (Fall 1993):491–500.

Takes the "allegorical" treatment of an unnamed sufferer of an unnamed disease in A27 as setting an unfortunate precedent to the extent that most AIDS-related stories follow Sontag's practice of depicting "people who know other people with AIDS" rather than depicting the sufferers directly.

H178 Fuëß, Roderich. "Der neuralgische Punkt: Notizen zur Rolle des Geschichtlichen in Biographie und Roman." *Sprache im technischen Zeitalter* (Berlin) No 125 (Mar. 1993):68–96.

Adduces Borges as exemplifying the (epistemic) distillation or "reduction" of factual and fictional narrative; takes Sontag's expansive intertextuality in A28—the "slow infiltration" of history, memory, and fantasy—as sustaining a similar tension between an established culture and its probable downfall. Contrasts the empiricism of Brian Fothergill's biography of William Hamilton with Sontag's A28 practice, where metaphor ("The Volcano Lover") suggests a paradoxical (subjective) causality whereby civilization's defenders are its most passionate discontents.

H179 Liddelow, Eden. "Sweet Doom: Melancholy in Susan Sontag's *The Volcano Lover*" *Scriptsi* (Melbourne) 8.3 (Apr. 1993): 169–82.

Lauds A28 as "an extraordinary" achievement despite its "faulty" narrational structure, a "slit" or "tear" that H179 mimes in three sections. (1) Describes A28's categorical characters—the Cavaliere, the Wife, the Hero—as monovocalities trapped in (yet pierced by) the narrator's "mordant" third-person narration, which is itself torn by a saturnine reflexivity in which gain (collection, knowledge, flesh) becomes loss or lack. (2) Criticizes the novel's "European, translated language," by contrast with the "brilliant, clear, agonised" stories of A14; Sontag's radio-play voice, especially in her fiction, is invisible yet vulnerable, material, responsible, striving to be ordinary. (3) Takes the desire to escape self-consciousness as equally the narrator's and the novel's, but the desire for literality and surface generates a slippage of past and present (tenses), a fault in the very concept of (romantic) expression by which the self, like a photograph or reproduction, becomes currency, mediation, otherness. Except in the novel's

four closing monologues, where (Kristeva's) *abjection* or dissolution allows an escape from narration—into opera.

H180 Modick, Von Klaus. "Kaleidoskop der Leidenschaften: Susan Sontag und ihr Roman 'Der Liebhaber des Vulkans.'" *Merkur* (Stuttgart) 47 (Aug. 1993):704–9.

Praises the narrative voice in [A28d](#) which, via indirect quotation, paraphrase, and irony, "brings historical figures down from their pedestals and actualizes them in contemporary terms." Takes the Cavaliere as the fictional equivalent of the melancholiac described in Sontag's essay on Walter Benjamin.

# SECTION I

## Dissertations, Books, and Monographs

11 Rogers, Rita A. "Styles of Surrealism: Selected English and American Manifestations of Surrealism." Ph. D. diss., Univ. of Wisconsin, 1972. 147pp.

Defines surrealism by reference to Breton and to the shifts over time in his perspective, from an early emphasis on the gap between self and world to a more collective and politically active focus on the transformative power of metaphoric language. Subsequent chapters on Herbert Read, Susan Sontag, and Sylvia Plath contrast the "Old Surrealism" of Breton and Read to the "New Surrealism" of Sontag and Plath.

The Sontag chapter—"Manifestations of New Surrealism during the 1960's: Susan Sontag" (pp. 61–105)—charts the shifts in her views from the aesthetic "erotics" of the "Notes on 'Camp'" and "Happenings" essays to her more explicitly if paradoxically "Old Surrealist" (i.e., French) characters and settings in *The Benefactor* (wherein the surrealist project is completed, hence destroyed) and then to the more explicitly political settings and themes of her late 1960s journalism—*Trip to Hanoi* (in which the subjective self is tested and expanded by contact with the Vietnamese "Other"), and her B38 *Ramparts* essay on Cuba (in which Sontag's critique of the "New Left" amounts to a rejection of surrealism in general, or an urging that the "New Surrealism" needs transformation before it can be a genuinely "New" Left).

12 Shinn, Thelma Wardrop. "A Study of Women Characters in Contemporary American Fiction 1940–1970." Ph.D. diss., Purdue Univ., 1972. vii+503pp.

Contrasts "Traditionalist" writers, whose characters fulfill "the role Western society dictates to women," and "Individualist" writers, whose characters are engaged in the existential project of self-definition. The last two "Individualist" women writers discussed (in Chapter 3: "The Sixties: Try, Try Again") are Sontag and Joyce Carol Oates.

Though Sontag's protagonists are male, they are true to the existentialist credo of self-definition through action, even when, as in the case of Hippolyte in *The Benefactor*, such self-definition is taken for insanity in a culture, personified chiefly by the book's female characters, where impersonal lives are determined by cultural "ideas" or "traditions." Whereas Hippolyte and Frau Anders of *The Benefactor* eventually embrace the fantasy of life defined by actions, Diddy in *Death Kit* exemplifies the existential paradox that a life defined by acts can only

be known at the time, in the act, of dying, which reveals his life to date as a form of living death, a knowledge Diddy disavows by displacing it onto fragmentary or illusory figures like Hester and Incardona, who stand as tokens of Diddy's self-destruction.

12a Shinn, Thelma J. *Radiant Daughters: Fictional American Women*. Westport, CT: Greenwood, 1986.

A revision of 12. Though much of the dissertation language is over- or re-written, the passages on Sontag are substantially the same. See Chapter 3, "Growing, Growing, Grown: Fiction of the 60's," pp. 141–6 especially.

13 Joss, Gerald Alan. "American Film Criticism, 1940–1969: A Comparative Study." Ph.D. diss., Univ. of Minnesota, 1973. i+ 303 pp.

Distinguishes between "liberal" and "formalist" film critics, and between film criticism and film theory. Because Sontag is a theorist, discussion of her work is limited to "Appendix A: Film Theory" (where Sontag's "Theatre and Film" is construed as an "anti-purist" rebuttal of Panofsky's "Style and Medium in the Motion Pictures") and "Appendix B: Notes on Some Other Important Film Critics" (where "The Imagination of Disaster" is compared favorably to Robert Warshow's essays on the western and the gangster film—by contrast, especially, with Sontag's more heavy-handed and self-contradicting "interpretations" of Godard, Bresson, and Bergman).

(A revised or reprinted version of this title occasionally surfaces in database searches. We have never been able to gain access, so cannot tell whether the revised title, as follows, indicates more material on Sontag or not: *American Film Criticism, 1940–1969: A Comparative Study of Andrew Sarris, James Agee, Pauline Kael, Dwight Macdonald, Manny Farber, Parker Tyler, Robert Warshow, Susan Sontag, and William Pechter*. New York: Revisionist Press, 1978.)

14 Todd, Jennifer. "Symbol, Sight and Society: An Inquiry into the Social Conditioning of Art." Ph. D. diss., Boston Univ., 1977. xiii +309 pp.

Argues that "the meaning of a picture is socially and historically constituted and that a picture expresses the norms embodied in its social and historical genesis." Though she figures prominently in other of Todd's writings (see H84), Sontag enters this discussion only in the last chapter, and then briefly, where she is taken to task for generalizing too quickly from "a category, photographs, which is identifiable on technical grounds alone," as if "photography-as-such" is the issue or problem. See pp. 274–5.

15 McKenna, Teresa. "The Politics of Metaphor: Dialectics of Oppression in Miguel Angel Asturias and Elsa Morante." Ph.D. diss., Univ. of California, Los Angeles, 1980. xi+219 pp.

The first chapter describes "The Aesthetic Art of Politics" by noting the dialectical, analogical relationship of metaphor, literature, and culture; each is a

species of “trope” by which the unfamiliar is familiarized, made meaningful—or its meaning contested. Praises *Illness as Metaphor* for recognizing the social force of metaphoric thinking, the ways in which using disease as a metaphor punishes those who suffer real diseases, and for showing how particular disease-metaphors derive from different historical conjunctures. Subsequent chapters on novels by Asturias and Morante discuss their use of madness or psychosis as a “defamiliarizing” literary trope à la Foucault that “exposes fundamental societal contradictions.” On Sontag see especially pp. 23–8.

16 Peterson, Norman Jay. “Photographic Art: Analysis of the Medium and Theoretical Encroachment.” Ph. D. diss., Univ. of Colorado at Boulder, 1980, vi +220 pp.

Chapters 1 (“Introduction”) and 2 (“Medium Analysis”) elaborate on the way the novelty of photography as an art medium raised new issues for aesthetics, leading to an emphatic form of “medium analysis” that “seeks a systematic formulation of the influence of the medium upon the art created by means of it” and assumes “a formed-matter” definition of art. Chapter 3 (“Revelation and the Work of Art”) presents an alternative picture of artworks that directly refutes the “formed-matter conception” by reference to art’s revelatory function via the concept of “disclosure.” Per Heidegger, it is the function of great art to disclose a new “transcendental structure,” a new world, by transvaluing the entire previously known environment. Because “The work of art which effects unconcealment is literally extra-ordinary in relation to the ordinary world that exists prior to it,” medium-specific theories that emphasize the mimetic capacity of photography or define all photographs as instancing the already known capacities of the medium are incapable of understanding photographs *as art* and thereby “encroach” upon and prevent the aesthetic “preservation” by which the viewer can “stand-within” the “extraordinary realm of the work.”

Sontag’s role is chiefly a matter of exemplification. Chapter 2 concludes with a survey of various medium analysts: Arnheim, Bazin, Kracauer, Cavell, Sontag, and Mumford. Where some praise photography for its (ontological) intimacy with reality and others decry the mechanistic or dehumanized aspect of photographic seeing that replaces (narrative) understanding with atomistic appearances, “All are agreed,” writes Peterson, “that the physical nature of the photographic media determines the general nature of photographic art.” Sontag’s A12 is often quoted to confirm the unanimity of the “medium analysis” approach: that it emphasizes the materiality of the image, that it takes genetic factors to be definitive, that it takes photography to replicate the preexisting visible domain. (In Chapter 5: “Photographic Art Reconsidered,” Sontag’s reading of Edward Weston is specifically contested.)

16a Peterson, Norman. *Photographic Art: Media and Disclosure*. Ann Arbor: UMI Research Press, 1984.

A slightly revised version of 16. The dissertation “Introduction” becomes Chapter 1, retitled “Photography’s

New Issues.” The dissertation’s “Appendix” becomes the book’s Chapter 6, “Automation and Art Theory.”

17 Holdsworth, Elizabeth McCaffrey. “Susan Sontag: Writer-Filmmaker.” Ph. D. diss., Ohio Univ., 1981. 179 pp.

“Introduction.” Takes Sontag’s “signature” to be a function less of subject matter or genre than approach, a search for “new, different, and surprising perspectives.”

“Chapter 1.” Takes the difficulty of categorizing Sontag’s multi-focused critical essays as mirroring their subjects in that “Sontag admires those who develop pluralistic sensibilities, those who strive for a new, desimplifying kind of consciousness.” Finds unity in Sontag’s ongoing concern for the “effects our literary and artistic structures have” on our apprehension of the world. Sontag faults 1960s art criticism for emphasizing interpretation of content at the expense of form or style, and for being “selective, obtuse, or narrow-minded” in its value judgments. Takes “The Aesthetics of Silence,” “One Culture and the New Sensibility,” and “What’s Happening in America” as evincing what Sontag “believes true in a general sense”—that art has inherited religion’s quest for transcendence, but what it has to transcend is language itself, hence the value of a “conditional” silence that “aids speech in attaining maximum integrity and seriousness.” Sontag takes contemporary social conditions as having transcended the conflict between literary and scientific culture, and as promising, through Dionysian eroticism, to overhaul the “character structure of modern American man.” Takes A12’s epistemological critique of the way photography tempts us to substitute an atomized, miniaturized, disconnected reality for that of lived experience as evincing Sontag’s deepest concerns; elaborates how her experience of cancer led her to ponder the stereotypes through which we experience (or deny) illness, especially those that re-create the mind/body split by attributing biological illness to psychological causes. Takes Sontag’s political writings, especially “Trip to Hanoi,” as similar attempts to “unclog” her (and our) thoughts. Takes the contrasting pictures of Riefenstahl in “On Style” and “Fascinating Fascism” as betokening Sontag’s often self-critical openness to change.

“Chapter 2.” Comprises three numbered sections. Claims that “as Sontag’s essays have moved from concern with the theoretical to the practical, so her fiction has moved from concern with the imagination to reality.” (1) Describes *The Benefactor* as an absurdist “anti-novel” of imaginative disburdenment. Praises the skill with which Sontag interweaves Hippolyte’s dream life and real life, to the point where the seam slowly disappears. Rejects mythic or psychological interpretations of A1, largely on the grounds that Hippolyte himself disclaims “the psychological relevance of his dreams,” while noting that “he interprets them badly” when he does. Compares Hippolyte and Sontag—in light of the occasions when Hippolyte’s philosophical musings echo Sontag’s published criticism—and concludes that A1 amounts to a fable about ideas

pushed to absurd extremes. (2) Observes the common narrative situations in *The Benefactor* and *Death Kit*—each features a main character who is a “tourist” in his own reality—while declaring A3’s Diddy “more grounded in everyday reality than Hippolyte.” Takes various narrative cues (e.g., the black orderly) as indicating that “the entire narrative recounts the contents of Diddy’s mind during his final coma”—though cites Sontag (F17) to the effect that she sought a cinematic believability even for the most magical or fantastic events of the novel. Follows Solotaroff (H10) in taking Incardona and Hester as personifications of Thanatos and Eros, Diddy’s desire to die and his desire to be reborn. (3) Takes the stories collected in *I, etcetera* as representing “a thematic change” in Sontag’s fiction, a search for a “self-transcendence” that goes beyond the suicidal “disburdenment” and silence characteristic of A1 and A3. Takes the narrator/protagonists of “American Spirits,” “Old Complaints Revisited,” and “Baby” as seeking ways to escape from exactly that sort of constriction. Praises “Debriefing” for its portrait of “destructiveness and sadness” overcome in the image of “a defiant, self-made Sisyphus.” Describes “Project for a Trip to China” and “Unguided Tour” as the “keystones” of A14 in their explicit depictions of characters who seek a “larger” connection to the world.

“Chapter 3.” Comprises three numbered segments. Describes the development of Sontag’s filmmaking—from fiction to documentary—as continuing the movement from theoretical abstraction to “historical fact” evident in her novels and short stories. (1) Recounts the plot of *Duet for Cannibals* with an emphasis on its uncertainties; cannibalistic games are played, but “the Bauers never reveal the rules.” *Duet* resists interpretation because its characters are “inscrutable,” its formal motifs (percussive sounds, head-wrapping) more abstract than realistic. (2) Notes the similar multi-couple casts of Sontag’s first two films; observes the extra couple in *Brother Carl*, also the two “mute children,” and finds their silence “psychologically plausible” and moving by contrast with Francesca’s silence in *Duet*. (3) Takes *Promised Lands* as “a paradigm” of the modern because it offers a multileveled presentation of the “complicated truth” that “the Arab-Israeli conflict has no obvious, acceptable solution.” Takes a battle-shocked soldier under psychotherapy, caught between past and present, as figuring the “Israeli experience” of “agony without resolution.” Though “detached” in tone, *Promised Lands* is “alive” to “grief and lamentation,” leaving the viewer to ponder “the human condition” in intimacy and silence.

“Conclusion.” Takes Sontag’s Hanoi trip as occasioning a shift in Sontag’s demystifying efforts, from misconceptions about aesthetics to misconceptions about reality, a shift that can be traced through her essays, her fiction, and her films. She is nevertheless consistent in her general themes (“silence, disburdenment, complexity”) and in her preference for “marginal” (often European) “cultural heroes” who attack tradition and promote a new sensibility.

18 Redfoot, Donald Leroy. “‘Catching the Shadow Ere the Substance Fade’: A Phenomenological Sociology of Photography and Modern Reality.” Ph. D. diss., Rutgers Univ., 1981. vii+300 pp.

The Introduction explains how the author's "twin interests in the nature of modern consciousness and in photography as a measure of time's passage were brought together" by *On Photography*. The "Concluding Unscientific Postscript" elaborates the "methodological affinities" between photography and "a phenomenologically-based sociology." Between the introduction and the postscript come seven chapters and an excursus, three of which discuss Sontag at some length.

"Chapter 4: Photography and the Problem of Modern Reality." Comprises four segments.

"*The Ontology of the Photographic Image.*" Elaborates a phenomenological understanding of reality and photography by contrast with the structuralist/Marxist view advanced by Barthes and Sontag. Compares their critique of the illusory and reductive nature of photography to Marx's (and Feuerbach's) analysis of religion as a fantastic projection that displaces "true reality." Argues the falseness of the photography/religion analogy by noting how the "realism" that lends photography its "authority" is also a source of "irony" by virtue of its temporality, an irony that undermines "the taken-for-grantedness of the natural attitude." Proposes, in lieu of the singular "mode of production" world of which photography is taken to be a super-structural "reflection," that viewers typically experience "three major types of photographic realities." *Photographic Worlds.* "Private photographs" are "always experienced in the past tense" by selves who are "partial" or "at a distance." By contrast, "public photographs" are experienced in relation to the "anonymous, typified nature associated with the public sphere," leading generally to "pseudoparticipation" in a "bureaucratized or historicized" time frame. "Fantasy photographs" portray "anonymous types" yet they "invite an immediate experience of pseudo-familiarity" outside "the time and space of the life-world." *The Plausibility Structures of the Photographic Types.* Because photographs present "a multiplicity of experiences" and are shot through with "ironies and paradoxes," the "plausibility structures" that sustain photographic meaning "must be correspondingly complex." Though the equation of photography and capitalism is confirmed by advertising photographs, the "mortality" under study in private photographs is hardly "an invention of late capitalism." *Photography and Modern Consciousness.* Though photography can be identified with modernity, it cannot be identified with late capitalism, nor equated exclusively with alienation. Photographs can be "informing or "degrading," and "We need to be able to tell the difference."

"Excursus: The Tourist." Contrasts the "heroic" traveler to the "inauthenticity" of the tourist (and of tourist photographs) in five segments. *The First Order Tourist.* Such a tourist violates the uncommitted "immediacy" of the adventurer by taking pictures that accord with prior expectations and for the sake of future reference. *The Second Order Tourist.* Such a tourist "self-consciously develops strategies in order to have a 'real' experience," though the tourist's desire to experience reality uncontaminated is itself a form of contamination. *The Third*

*Order Tourist*. Takes the anthropologist as seeking an “authenticity” beyond that (ostensibly) experienced by “second order” tourists, though the anthropologist’s scientific impersonality hardly insures against “historical anxiety.” *The Fourth Order Tourist*. Such a “tourist” avoids the anthropologist’s alienation by “going native,” often by “turning East.” *On Tourism: A Lecture to Its “Cultured Despisers.”* Agrees with Paul Fussell that “We are all tourists now,” but disagrees about the extent to which this is definitive of modernity—as if earlier travelers were ever lacking in expectations, as if the tourist experience were not a *real* experience. If anything, it is the “tourist angst” of tourism’s “cultured despisers” that is modernity’s true sign, a token of “a peculiarly modern nervousness” that follows from reality’s temporality and instability.

“Chapter 7: Modernity and the Reality of Private Photographs.” Comprises three segments. *The Structure of the Story*. Family photo collections, apart from graduation and retirement photos, neglect the public sphere. The temporal “coherence” typical of modern identity is reflected in “the structured succession of roles in ‘family time’” on view in photo albums. *The Meaning of the Story: The Meaning of Aging and Identity*. Notes the affinity between the birth of the concept of the family or private sphere and the rise of modern industrial capitalism; correlates changing notions of childhood and the “overwhelming emphasis given to childhood in family pictures.” Takes the “negative” side of the family story to be its suppression of divorce, of illness, of death. *The Family Album as Ritual*. While agreeing with Sontag that private photographs ritualistically mark off a “family” reality, Redfoot disagrees that this ritual is self-deludingly sad. Instead, such rituals are “tragic” to the extent that they recognize the destructive nature of modern life in the absence of other cosmic or sacred frameworks. Though the conditions of modern life that lead to this “tragic” quality are themselves (contra Sontag) “happy” ones—in that families are “happier and more prosperous” than ever—they produce “a multiplicity of worlds which can leave the individual feeling alone and homeless,” to which family photographs respond as “an ontological affirmation of the worth of modern existence.”

19 Quinn, Kenneth. *Method in Criticism from A.E. Houseman to Susan Sontag*. Tenth Todd Memorial Lecture. Univ. of Sydney, 1982. 24pp.

Sketches a history of twentieth-century criticism by reference to Houseman’s “Inaugural” lecture of 1911, itself a provocative attack on the propriety of teaching “judicial” criticism, and Sontag’s “Against Interpretation” which, on Quinn’s reading, also entails resistance to an “institutionalized” form of critical practice. Takes Sontag’s condemnation of “interpretation” as proof that Houseman was wrong in claiming that criticism had no method; for Sontag, there was method too much. Takes B15 as attacking, not interpretation in the general sense, but “a mutant form of that method” that favors “content” over “sensory experience.” Associates Sontag’s critique with two “sixties” notions: that interpretation is “morally wrong,” and “that all interpretations are equally valid.” Takes the former as open to discussion, the latter as “quite crazy.” Accuses

Sontag of “cheating” in her inclusion of film as among those arts suffering under interpretation’s regime because a film director is obliged to interpret a script in ways typically reserved, with novels and poems, to the reader, whose “performance” of the text is accordingly more open.

110 Sayres, Sandra. “Susan Sontag and the Practice of Modernism.” Ph. D. diss., SUNY Buffalo, 1982. iii+306 pp.

Comprises an introduction, four chapters, and a conclusion.

“Introduction.” Takes Sontag as exemplifying “the ethos of modernism”; her fictional characters speak its language (“personal, argumentative”), the choice between “extinction” and “duplication” provides the allegorical structure for her stories; perception is aestheticized, which yields finally to solipsism, for which the only remedy is “disburdenment.” Describes the modernist mode of writing as “epigrammatical,” defined as a kind of self-contained, self-negating paradox unconnected to experience or feeling or communities. (Epigram is discussed at length: via etymology; its relation to the “elegiac” mode, to the “diaphoric” aspect of metaphor, to the alienated perceptual literalness of Robbe-Grillet.)

“Chapter I: The Practice.” Claims that Sontag’s dilemma is less her role as a boundary-crossing intellectual than the baggage of (epigrammatical) modernism she carries with her, which enjoys “unassailable prestige without holding a position”; the moral positions Sontag does assert are a matter of persistence, not a logical consequence of her modernism or its death-laden ethos of (self-)negation. Uses Sontag’s (own) categorical method to suggest a “formal” (vs. an explanatory) connection between Sontag’s fiction and essays, based on a common “fear” of the “loss of flesh, of bodily substance,” a fear acted out by Hippolyte and Diddy, a fear argued out or away in *Illness as Metaphor*. That total “disburdenment” or “self-negation” is impossible lends the credence of “difficulty” to the effort. If the personal sources of Sontag’s negativism are obscure, a more self-evident source is modernism itself, whose “nonprogressive” contradictions Sontag takes on. Adduces Trilling, to the effect that literary modernism advocates “the overcoming of alienation by completing it,” in the “belief that something better (or more true) lies beyond. The only “recognizable affirmation” on view in negation’s wake, however, is the “pathos” of those caught in the modernist paradox—like Sontag’s Hippolyte and Diddy. In Sontag’s criticism and political journalism, by contrast, (historical) distinctions are drawn, if only in response and as counter to the uncertainty fostered by epigrams (or the self-consistency made possible by a skeptical solipsism). Sixties political “will” and late modernist aesthetics come together in the concept of “style,” understood as a marker of personal independence or as a sign of cultural bad faith. In the aftermath of the 1970s, the danger of “aestheticizing” life and politics via style became clearer, especially if “will” becomes synonymous with “desire”—to which Sontag’s increased emphasis (contra Norman O. Brown) on negation and abstraction can be taken as a response. Despite changes in Sontag’s views, her sustained concern with late modernism has been over-taken by postmodernism and deconstruction. Sontag’s devotion to late modernism is so

close to Hippolyte's (as each is close to Sartre's) that questions must be raised. (See H156.)

"Chapter II: *The Benefactor, Death Kit, and The Allegory of Deletion.*" Comprises an introduction and three subheaded sections. Characterizes the protagonists of A1 and A3 as figures of "absence" who, by retreating from their own world (into madness, into death), retreat from the reader. Their stories are allegorical in the sense that "they invite us to read them from outside," yet neither book is a satire, if only because the interior of each character is so fully developed that there is no exterior world to measure him by. They are allegories "of deletion" (as Marie Kurrik has characterized the modernist project) in that they almost literally show "the negating power of consciousness" transformed into "the deleting power of language"; negation is reduced, subjectivized.

*The Benefactor: Deciding the State of a Sensibility.* Hippolyte is portrayed as a "revolutionary" of "the self" by "disburdening" himself twice over; by allowing his dreams to dictate his actions, and by recounting the results, as if to "use up" or "exhaust" them. By doing what his dreams dictate, Hippolyte both obeys and defies authority, by *choosing* his fate, his dismemberment. Hippolyte's success thus depends upon how well he interprets his dreams, yet clues (the return of the dead Frau Anders, journals, a letter) suggest his failure, à la Artaud. If madness, suffering, and silence are the modern "kits" of aesthetic and political authenticity, Hippolyte's revolt via "posture" is too painless, too easy. In this, Hippolyte anticipates postmodernism; consciousness is reduced to "waste product." In her 1973 essay on Artaud, Sontag confirms the implicit conservatism of this failure to distinguish aesthetic from political revolution.

*Death Kit: In Morbidity's Dominion.* Describes A3 as answering A1: "thinking self-deletion does not purge one of oneself. The self is tenacious; it is also banal and brutal." Takes Diddy's doubled voice and banal (American) aphorisms as "clumsy" and overdetermined, as if designed to forestall or deny something. The book succeeds at making "time stand still"; Diddy's words, indeed, are finally readable as (the record of) an unconscious struggle between life and death, eros and thanatos; the death moment drawn out in an energetic rush of words, words that seem to describe and sustain a world, but that conclude with Diddy's charnel house stroll, a kind of Cartesian nightmare puzzle: the "nightmare that there are *two* worlds. The nightmare that there is *one* world. This one." If Hippolyte's modernism gets off too easily, Diddy's proves that the "art of self-annihilation, the art that says nothing, that destroys itself and its maker—the art of 'The Aesthetics of Silence'—is coincident with the desire for finitude and death."

*Concluding Remarks.* Neither novel invites or attracts sympathy, due to a lack of presence, of characters to situations, of narrator to reader—as if Sontag were actively denying or negating her surrogates, hence her (modernist) self. The explanatory force of this view of Sontag's novelistic motives is confirmed by Sontag's essay-portraits of writerly heroes, where she is equally as ambivalent about the modernist project. In Canetti, she finds a model of this (self-cancelling)

ambivalence, fiction allegorizing (so as to avoid addressing) a failure to make connections with “living possibility.”

“Chapter III: Thought Commemorated.” Sontag is less motivated by the “ideas” of the critics she studies than by the “dramaturgy” of their thinking and its “sensibility,” its (modernist) “agony.” Against the charge that this amounts to “an ideology of personal indulgence,” Sayres observes Sontag’s investment in negativity, her concern for writers who resist easy interpretation. Yet Sontag’s essays “measure more loss than gain.” Her own “epigrammatical” style is a case in point; epigrams are impersonal, pointed, self-cancelling monuments to the writer as “a lost soul.” Stranded amid the “ruins,” such writers “have no choice but to look to themselves.” Takes the guiding spirit of Sontag’s history of modernist writing to be Walter Benjamin, whose melancholy sensibility she praises at the expense of his ideological engagements. In Lévi-Strauss’s case, this interiority has the virtue of sparing the world more meaning and oppressed peoples more proselytizing. In sparing others meaning, Lévi-Strauss thus effects his own salvation. Yet the “self that appears to be [thus] negated is actually sheltered.” Takes Lévi-Strauss’s attack on history (via Sartre) as figuring Sontag’s *Trip to Hanoi* desire to be purged of “western hyperconsciousness.” Any temptation on Sontag’s part to critique this desire is suppressed by a reviewer’s desire to recommend. Yet the repressed returns in Sontag’s distortion of Benjamin’s historical interpretation of *Trauerspiel*, where he “reveals the ulterior meaning of allegory to be a vacuum inviting evil.” Modernism is for Benjamin a historical and ideological recognition of this evil *as* alienation, an alienation *caused* by the interiorizing and aestheticizing of experience. But “the story [Sontag] wants to tell” is the interior one. Her ambivalence on these accounts is evident in the difference between her interest in pathos (as subject) and her epigrammatical style: pathos seeks reassurance, while the “epigram is basically irresponsible.” Sontag explains Sartre’s failure in *Saint Genet* as that of a writer (per Sayres) “not yet resigned to the limitations of the epigrammatical mode.” The ironic result of Sartre’s effort to beat language (or Genet) at its own game is an endless (masturbatory) rush of words. Because modernism for Sontag just *is* the choice between self-confirming pathos and epigrammatical self-abuse, she inevitably casts herself as the apologist for those who stay resolutely within the circle of selfhood. A second measure of Sontag’s modernist ambivalence is the debate she stages between Cioran and Cage in “Thinking Against Oneself.” Though admiring the passion of Cioran’s allegorical struggle with history and mortality, Sontag nevertheless concludes by reference to Cage’s typically American “lightness,” his trust that the only necessity is “the empty space of time.” Yet Cage too must (for Sayres) be subjected to a historical-materialist critique. Even if art *can* be “innocent relative to the value of experience,” thought cannot be. Memory—rather than patronize itself in modernist agony—must invest “the past constantly with the present, not overlooking the smallest transformation which signals the oppressed’s desire for the future.” Yet on Sontag’s reading the communal and historical elements of Benjamin drop out

altogether. In her essay on Canetti Sontag acknowledges that denying history is a (displaced) protest against death, but in her “historical-mindedness” she seems blind to Benjamin’s “historical-consciousness”; only the latter “finds the necessary in our actions and puts it to the critique of a *telos*” The nakedness of that failure absolves her of hiding, as Lukács has accused modernists of doing, behind “the external incognito.” Moreover, her emphasis on the “form” of sensibility rebukes the neo-Marxist tendency to reduce all form to content. Yet in so doing Sontag is herself guilty of an allegorical reduction— by which “one writer begins to look like another.”

“Chapter IV: The Burden of the Aesthetic.” Comprises an introduction and five subheaded sections. In [A2](#) Sontag “encircles art” so as to fend off hermeneutic criticism and thence to cure art of its avant-garde vocation for didacticism. Though she advocates a “transparent” art, comparative judgments are possible in Sontag’s aesthetic, in favor of tragedy as an “ennobling vision of nihilism,” against irony, realism, comedy. Attends little to author psychology or purpose. An autonomous art, moreover, can “devour” the world and (like Happenings) assault its audience, hence the “cool thought” Sontag puts between herself and the art she defends. Art’s (ideological) “treachery” and the critical “bombast” required of an aesthetic of autonomy push Sontag toward the “ethical” and the social. Takes her incoherent attempts to purge style of its tendency toward “stylization” as symptomatic of a general ambivalence regarding the ethics/aesthetics relation, as is her since-recanted praise of Riefenstahl. Sontag’s aesthetic is more generous, less elitist than Nietzsche’s (e.g., her praise of Camp); yet her modernist claim that a “New Sensibility” has led us to “One Culture” is rebuked in Sontag’s subsequent ruminations on photography.

*The Late 1960’s.* Political crises raise the question of how to oppose the “One Culture.” Art itself needs negation, especially the “myth” of the “power of art to negate through silence.” In “The Aesthetics of Silence” sensibility is replaced as a concern by “spirituality,” for which art is one of the modern era’s “most active metaphors.” At times silence seems only a form of despair in the face of “secular historical consciousness.” The obligation to negate is turned at last on consciousness itself, or on the (vaguely Althusserian) “self.”

*The Two Films: Duet for Cannibals and Brother Carl.* Sontag opens her aesthetic theory to self-expression and to the ethical as she gets closer to “her subject,” which is, openly in *Brother Carl*, a silence born of pain. Describes [E2](#) as a “bone-dry” study in “ritualized cruelty.” Takes biographical data (the suicide of Susan Taubes) as confirming the personal quality of [E5](#). Allegory in *Brother Carl* is *not* a matter of heroic self-cancellation. Rather, we get a miracle, a more “pure” form of hope, which negates self-negation. Thus Carl gives speech to Anna; a miracle for her, modernist self-negation for him.

*Reconsidering Artaud.* The modernist “myth” of self-negation stays with Sontag, though in her essay on Artaud Sontag complains (per Sayres) that “Artaud’s kind of modernism fails as a spiritual project because, one, it cannot make itself political, and, two, it cannot shake off the taint of the morbid.” Sees

Sontag as out to save a wholesome concept of authorship (à la Breton) against which Artaud's excessive compression of art and life, mind and body, is measured and found lacking, as a form of "aestheticizing"—a practice also under auto-critique in "Fascinating Fascism," where Sontag recants her praise for Riefenstahl and Camp.

*On Photography.* Photography ironically completes and inverts Artaud's project, aestheticizing the world (by beauty, not cruelty) thus to confirm reality as it stands. Photography's effortlessly surrealist capacity to beautify everything makes specific ethical or political "negation" impossible, rendering ever less certain (per Sontag) "the distinction between images and things, copies and originals."

*Concluding Remarks.* Modernism's triumph in photography forces Sontag to perform an "about face" when it comes to defending contemporary art, which, far from being overwhelmed by interpretation, is ready to "overwhelm us." Cites Benjamin's more hopeful view of photography—as involving a "tactile" and "habitual" relationship to the "task" of perception that might "humanize" the world through a proliferation of "differences." Photography's easy surrealism is not painful enough for Sontag, not ambitious enough in will or burden. Except in the case of a true masterpiece like Syberberg's *Hitler, A Film from Germany*, which overcomes the modernist "stalemate" by making "everything" mean or speak. Adduces Jameson's explanation of the film's success, which hinges crucially on the artist's subjectivity. Though Sontag wants to give up modernism's "pathetic fallacy," she still admires the heroism it exemplifies.

"Conclusion." Pays homage to "pleasures" of the epigrammatical mode, particularly to the way its pointed precision can "outline" and "dignify" silence in a world where the only certainty is repetition, without which the world would be lost altogether. The "overscrupulous" voice of the stories collected in *I, etcetera* comes close to Sontag's, which remains epigrammatical in its tendency to extract itself from larger contexts. Yet "negation" depends upon context, hence the chief "paradox" of modernism, forced (in the apparent absence or suspension of history) to negate (or cannibalize) itself. The closest Sontag comes to engaging history is "an acute sense of how manner totalizes," to which she responds by developing "a gift for separating one manner from another," as in her 1969 essay on Cuba which distinguished (per Sayres) between "Cubans' ambitions for their revolution" and "the liberating hedonism Americans wanted for themselves," though (also per Sayres) the contrast risks (modernist) oversimplification. Modernist contempt for the world is avoided only by a painful contempt for the "impossible self," a contempt that tries (like the epigram) to "fix" (by fictively "completing") the (perpetually endless) moment. Takes Sontag's 1982 denunciation of communism as instancing this self-contempt. Though Sontag is alert to the dangers of aestheticizing, she nevertheless defends the autonomy of the aesthetic and the "heroism of the solitary writer," as if in reaction to her own publicity. Modernism and postmodernism are compared vis-à-vis history; Sontag's "late modernist"

practice “negates” history by walling it off. Sontag writes modernism’s epilogue by confusing dialectical or political negation with “the modernist drama of being contemporary—living with the paradox of transcending oneself through negation in a world that wills itself to deny history.” This is allegory à la Benjamin, where “truth” is reduced to “mere knowledge of the barren self.”

*I10a*

Sayres, Sohnya. *Susan Sontag: The Elegiac Modernist*. New York: Routledge, 1990.

A much revised version of [I10](#).

“Introduction.” Adduces the paradoxical aspects of Sontag’s intellectual position and reputation. That Sontag *has been* politically active while remaining stubbornly “literary” is (still) a source of controversy. Yet her art too is controversial, for being “too Europeanizing, too cold.” What is constant in her efforts “is an attachment to the present as the *hard way*,” “living out” the fate of modernism as “an ethos.” Her (tenuous) position as a second-generation New York Intellectual is sketched out; her indebtedness to European modernism is explicated by reference to “Pilgrimage.” The danger she faces in her devotion to the modernist ethos is that its “aesthetic turns idolatrous in its very efforts to be iconoclastic.” This danger is the substance of her fiction. Sontag’s more public activities are discussed—as a book reviewer, as analyst of mass culture, her engagement with the AIDS crisis—through all of which she sustains a willingness to provoke, working as much “against herself as against culture in general.

“1: Biographical Notes.” Tells the Sontag story by reference to the public record (chiefly interviews) and to Sontag’s more autobiographical pieces. Themes of death, of illness, of memory, of exile or imaginative imprisonment, of spectacular advancement through school, of intellectual models (Trilling) or mentors (Kenneth Burke) predominate. At chapter’s end Sayres avers to have taken Sontag at her word that “Everything that I write is fiction.”

“2: Key Terms.” As annotated at [H156](#). Though most of “Key Terms” derives from [I10](#) Chapter 1, portions of the dissertation’s introduction, its Chapter 2, and its conclusion are also included. The language of “Spirit of Negation” and “Pathos of Heroes” is new matter, as is most of “The Melancholic Allegorist.” The “Coda” segment of [H156](#) is dropped here, though its last paragraph is retained.

“3: The Two Novels: *The Benefactor* and *Death Kit*” Substantially the same in theme and structure as Chapter 2 of [I10](#). The opening remarks are somewhat expanded, most

crucially by reference to the “postmodern” aspect of *Death Kit*’s conclusion, its view of “the world, above all, as an inventory of objects and broken ideas.” Language is added equating Diddy’s “death kit” with America’s; Diddy’s murder of Incardona lacks the sanctification of “overkill” by which “his own country” excuses its “historical atrocities.” I10’s “Concluding Remarks” are severely abbreviated.

“4: The Burden of the Aesthetic.” Similar in outline and in specific segments to Chapter 4 of I10. The opening segment discusses “Against Interpretation” at greater length, emphasizing the difference it posits between good and bad interpretation; good criticism is “descriptive” and “dissolves considerations of consciousness into those of forms”—seen as an attempt to “overcome the old dichotomy between freedom of the aesthetic apprehension and the strictures of the moral.” Great artists, per Sontag, must “go to the end, either of the idea or of the emotion which inspires” it. And by “end” Sontag (Sayres) means a quasi-Kantian “goal” that is a “burden” of an artwork’s “immanence.”

*On the Plane of the Search.* Evokes Nietzsche’s will or intelligence as, per the early Sontag, the “immanent” goal or end of a work of (modern) art; describes Sontag as assaying (via selection “along a narrow band”) which works (should) rise or fall “from planes of abstraction.” Charts shifts across the essays in A2 from moral/aesthetic imperiousness to more playful celebrations of (distinct, stratified) sensibilities, while observing how Sontag’s emphasis on form displaces a concern with expression, and evinces her “moderating” approach to immoderate art (e.g., Riefenstahl). The “One Sensibility” of the essay that concludes A2 is problematic in its leveling of aesthetic hierarchy, in contrast to the way Sontag’s “law of immanence presses her to take the claims of modernism’s rhetoric of autonomy to its depths.” Modernism’s solipsism verges on madness, which Sontag fends off via form, especially via debates around the oldest forms, tragedy and comedy.

*The “Aesthetics of Silence.”* Substantially the same as “The Late 1960’s” segment of I10, though it takes a more negative view of “spirituality.” Silence betokens an inability to realize the ideal of transcendence or to give up the myth or its pathos. In rejecting historical consciousness, B28 abandons a “true negating principle,” is breathtakingly self-negating. And the self on trial is Sontag.

*The Two Films: Duet for Cannibals and Brother Carl.* The discussion of each film is considerably expanded by contrast with I10. Takes Sontag's E2 portrait of Bauer as the aging revolutionary as symptomatically cynical, as if Sontag "needed a villain to hide" the film's (and Sontag's) death-wish emptiness. Describes *Brother Carl* as a triptych—autism, suicide, muteness—on the altar of "caring." Also added are brief remarks about Sontag's other films, *Promised Lands* and *Unguided Tour*, as prologue to a contrast between Sontag's "aesthetic of silence" and her "dramaturgy of silence." Against the "aesthetic" strain, Sayres poses the example of Artaud, "screaming out of control."

*Approaching Artaud.* Though obviously related to the corresponding I10 segment, much of the language is new matter. Takes Sontag's exhumation of Artaud as a means of "containing" him, by declaring him an unreadable failure, by containing him *to* "aesthetic apperception." So Sontag repeats herself (à la Sartre on Genet) by examining Artaud under her standard rubrics: moralism, representation, madness, gnosticism—opposing his modernist excesses in the name of "moral tact."

*On Photography.* Nearly word for word I10.

*The Elegist of Postmodern Culture.* Condenses I10's "Concluding Remarks." Jameson's analysis of Syberberg is less cited than alluded to; the success of *Hitler* is attributed less to subjectivity than to the fact that Hitler provides Syberberg with a "great subject" worthy of negation.

"5: Thought Commemorated." Substantially the same as Chapter 3 of I10. The shift of interest "from sensibility into temperament" is contextualized more thoroughly. Large segments of I10 are discarded, including those dealing with Sontag's epigrammatical style, with her ideological "absence" or blankness, with Benjamin's work on German tragic drama (some of this material appears in "Key Terms"). The concluding paragraphs here are augmented by material confirming the autobiographical aspect of Sontag's portrait-essays; like her subjects, Sontag fictionalizes thought (as "dramaturgy") in ways that avoid intellectual substance.

"Conclusion." Revises and extends the I10 "Conclusion." Ponders Sontag's "more openly political" essays and performances—her Cuba piece (B38), "Trip to Hanoi," "A Letter from Sweden." Sontag's political self is contrasted with the narrators in her fiction, as if Sontag were one of the younger characters in *Duet for Cannibals*, needing to

“disburden” herself of the influence of her intellectual mentors by acquiring a distinctive public voice, one deriving more from “the politics of conscience” than from “real politics” or “political analysis.” (The “Town Hall” portion of 110 is included here.) Sontag’s devotion to modernism’s founding paradox is finally summed up not relative to a history denied (as in 110) but to “the bloody and bittersweet *promesse de bonheur* of nature” that modernism “rejects most of all”—a shift that serves as prologue to discussion (never in the dissertation) of Sontag’s thoughts on illness and AIDS. Sontag’s refusal to “interpret” disease, to give it meaning, is an attempt to postpone a “fall” into “the experience of nature,” a refusal AIDS activists find regrettable. Chiefly in “The Way We Live Now” is Sontag’s silence interpretable as sympathy for AIDS victims. Sontag no longer “trusts” the “late modern aesthetic,” yet she refuses to step beyond it, even as she enacts its limitations and evokes its disburdenment.

I11 Hume, Beverly Ann. “The Framing of Evil: Romantic Visions and Revisions in American Fiction.” Ph. D. diss., Univ. of California, Davis, 1983. iii+239 pp.

Protests the “reduction” of “evil” in twentieth-century fiction and criticism to mere “immorality.” Cites *Illness as Metaphor* in the Introduction to the effect that twentieth-century writers typically have a “sense of evil” but lack metaphors to express it. Objects to Sontag’s subsequent condemnation of the use of “illness” as an inadequate if not hurtful figure for the “sense of evil.” The trope is not the sole property of the twentieth century, and certain modern novelists—Mailer, for instance—still evidence an ability to depict evil. Hume’s reading of evil in nineteenth-century fiction leads her to doubt whether “one could think of a better word, metaphor, or complex of ideas for evil than evil,” though she grants the necessity for reviving “the moral, amoral, and immoral” senses of the term, which is exactly what her analyses of Brown, Poe, Hawthorne, and Melville undertake to accomplish.

I12 McMurry, Nan Marie. “‘And I? I Am in a Consumption’: The Tuberculosis Patient, 1780–1930.” Ph. D. diss., Duke Univ., 1985. xv+313 pp.

Though *Illness as Metaphor* avowedly inspired this study of the culture of tuberculosis, Sontag is not discussed. Then again, two chapters (“The Phthisical Sex: Consumption in Women” and “*The Magic Mountain*”) are obviously pertinent.

I13 Tydeman, William E. “Photography, Meaning and Methodology: American Writings on Photography since 1945.” Ph. D. diss., Univ. of New Mexico, 1985. viii+232 pp.

Seeks to clear away theoretical confusion regarding the “nature of photography” and/or the proper “methodology” for “unlocking photographic meaning”; only then will the photographic “work itself” receive concerted

attention, and only then will photo criticism be able to avoid the fate of contemporary literary criticism, which renders literary works less rather than more accessible by resort to “arcane” abstractions. Chapters 4 through 6 are devoted to individual critics, the last of them to Sontag.

“Chapter Six: Susan Sontag.” Traces the “photographic” aspect of Sontag’s critical and artistic vision through *The Benefactor* (the “mirror” motif) and *Death Kit* (the way the final “tunnel” sequence recalls Peter Hujar’s photographs of the Palermo catacombs) to her critique of Riefenstahl. Elaborates Sontag’s troubled view of modernity and authorship by reference to her essays on Artaud (D22) and Cioran (D19), where writing is opposed to literature, i.e., to history; as “the most historical of the arts,” photography both defies and enacts the paradox by which history renders itself “homologous” and hence amoral, thus encouraging authors to “disestablish” themselves à la Arbus. Photography according to Sontag both beautifies and decontextualizes, neither of which is morally consistent with “socially conscious photography,” though only the claim regarding context is, in Tydeman’s view, sustainable. Takes “Photographic Evangels” as a critique of photography’s own tendency toward modernist self-absorption at the expense of reality, as if photographs were a shortcut to truth, one which replaced words with pictures. Links Sontag’s qualms about photo-realism with her “On Style” strictures on “content”—as contrasted with her McLuhan-esque emphasis (c.f., “One Culture and the New Sensibility”) on the perceptual and cognitive importance of form. Criticizes Sontag’s surrealist “assumption that all photography is the same” (for example, in beautifying) despite her recognition that context changes meaning—though her moral concern in linking the acquisitiveness of photography with the predatory habits of late-stage capitalism is comprehensible in light of the connection she makes between fascist theatricality and the spectacular elements of capitalist consumerism. Praises Sontag’s concern with “how modernism has influenced our view of the world” and her specific criticism of Arbus.

I14 Infantine, Stephen C. “Proust and Photography: Studies in Single-Lens Reflexivity.” Ph. D. diss., Univ. of Southern California, 1986. iii+184pp.

Though this analysis of Proust “through a photographic perspective” recalls Sontag’s writings on photography, she is barely alluded to (see Chapter 3, “Photography and Death”).

I15 Lesser, Ronnie C. “Causal Beliefs about Cancer.” Ph. D. diss. City Univ. of New York, 1986. x+136 pp.

Seeks to account for cultural variables in the attribution of subjective causality to victims of misfortune—contra Piaget’s “organistic” or “universalist” teleology of cognitive development, which links causality and logic. *Illness as Metaphor* provides the primary test case, i.e., the human habit of blaming cancer victims for their cancers. Empirical research found that subjective causal attributions vary significantly depending on the similarity of the subject and the victim, especially when the subjects were psychology majors who tended to favor “unconscious motivation” explanations of disease over, say, dietary

explanations. The greater the similarity of subject and victim, the greater the tendency to blame the victim, as a means of asserting that cancer is individually controlled and hence avoidable.

I16 Pestino, Joseph Francis. "The Reader/Writer Affair: Instigating Repertoire in the Experimental Fiction of Susan Sontag, Walter Abish, Réjean Ducharme, Paul West, and Christine Brooke-Rose." Ph. D. diss., Pennsylvania State Univ., 1986. ix+218 pp.

Combines Sontag's "erotic" view of reading as cooperative "seduction" and Wolfgang Iser's picture of the literary "repertoire" brought actively into play in the act of "realizing" a text— though the concept of an "instigating repertoire," amounting to an initiating, global reading hypothesis provided by the author, is meant as a corrective to Iser. Chapter 2 is devoted to Sontag.

"When a Dream Is More Than a Dream: Susan Sontag's Use of Dream Psychology Instigating Repertoire." Discusses A1 and A3 as instancing this "experiential" relation of reader and text. Takes Hippolyte's dream reports, in their disguised expression of the dreamer's "day residues," as exemplifying his paradoxical "passive-aggressive" personality. Indeed, Hippolyte engages in "lucid dreaming" of a sort that implies self-consciousness and transformation; he tries to "read" himself, as the reader in turn "reads" him. Yet "lateral homologies" (fear, shame, guilt) among Hippolyte's various dream experiences reveal his own contradictory and fragmentary status, evincing a necessity for self-justification and unification that his explicit statements of self-satisfaction would seem to deny. Praises the dream-within-a-dream sophistication of *Death Kit* by reference to the "high dream" induced by drugs. Diddy's overdose-induced "high" casts the entire narrative into a "doubled" (third- and first-person) register that denies yet reveals (to Diddy and reader alike) the fact of suicide and the life-logic leading up to it. Contests Solotaroff's H10 description of the narrative as "a supernatural account of [Diddy's] afterlife." Concludes by reference to the "twice over" passivity decried in *On Photography*, a passivity Sontag's novels positively discourage.

I17 Smith, Peter Andrew. "Entropy in American Fiction." Ph. D. diss., Univ. of Notre Dame, 1987. iii+308 pp.

Interprets American fiction from Poe to Pynchon via the paradox whereby the attempt to increase the order and organization of experience through language (contra the entropic tendency of energy and organization to run down) depends upon a degree of conformity or similarity that is itself "a mechanism of entropy."

"Chapter Six: Resignation." Discusses works by John Earth, Kurt Vonnegut, Susan Sontag, and Thomas Pynchon that study characters whose response to life in the entropic modern waste-land is a kind of post-suicidal or post-apocalyptic avoidance of or resignation to the down-running course of existential events. Discusses *Death Kit* by reference to the "generator metaphor" Sontag's narrator uses to characterize Diddy's entropic decline; his "murder" of Incardona, ostensibly occasioned by an obstruction that brings his train to a stop, has the effect of "cluttering" Diddy's life with psychic debris that eventually crowds him

into the silent dream-space of the tunnel-turned-crypt of the novel's final chapter. The uncertain status of Sontag's narrator is compared to the generally "reflexive" quality of all the novels discussed, for which the uncertain relation of fact and fiction figures the writer's dilemma in trying to fend off entropy or stasis with a language that seems itself entropic and static.

118 Price, Andrew Jude. "The Entropic Imagination in Twentieth-Century American Fiction: A Case for Don DeLillo." Ph. D. diss. Univ. of Notre Dame, 1988. ii+141 pp.

Databases often list this dissertation in "Sontag" subject searches; Sontag receives only the most passing mention.

119 Bowen, Deborah. "Mimesis, Magic, Manipulation: A Study of the Photograph in Contemporary British and Canadian Novels." Ph. D. diss. Univ. of Ottawa. 1990. ix+426 pp.

Ponders the relationship of photography to literary modernism by reference to *On Photography* and Barthes's *Camera Lucida* and to novels by an array of contemporary British and Canadian writers (e.g., Julian Barnes, Fay Weldon, Margaret Atwood, Alice Munro), for most of whom photography figures as an especially resonant trope for creation and perception. Takes the difference of Sontag and Barthes as typifying the contrary attitudes toward fiction and photography evidenced in her selection of novelists. Sontag is referred to throughout, though nearly always in summary form; this character's or novelist's perspective is seen as concurring (or not) with some component of Sontag's view; only in her Introduction does Bowen deal with Sontag directly.

"Introduction." Comprises three numbered segments.

(1) Elaborates photography's "susceptibility to variant readings," chiefly the realist ("mimesis"), the symbolist ("magic"), and the parodic postmodernist ("manipulation"). (2) Ponders the relationship between photography and memory (by reference to Berger) and between photography and language (by reference to Barthes). Though Sontag's general affinity for Barthes is noted, his *Camera Lucida* claim that the subjectively affective "punctum" of photography allows an as-if magical escape to reference from the fictionality of language is set against Sontag's argument that photography fictionalizes the world by duplication. Where Barthes praises photography for compelling a "vertical" reading that counters the necessarily fictive "horizontal" reading typical of narrative and memory, Sontag damns photography for essentially the same reason, though on the added premise that only narrative allows for moral comprehension. (3) Extends the comparison of Sontag and Barthes by hypothesizing how writers subscribing to their views will differ in their use of photography as fictional figure. Where the usually self- and time-conscious (and British) "Sontagian writer" will emphasize the ambiguous powers of photography by means of narrative context and irony, the space-conscious (and usually Canadian) "Barthean writer" will emphasize "the visual image itself as hallucinatory magic" leading to epiphanic moments of readerly transcendence.

120 Kennedy, William G. "Engagement and Disburdenment: The Writings of Susan Sontag." Ph. D. diss. Univ. of Nottingham. [1990.] 307 pp.

Comprises an introduction, conclusion, and eight chapters in three parts.

"Introduction." Takes the "standard" Sontag-as-fashionable-radical picture as symptomatic of the discursive authority her "hit and run" theorizing seeks to challenge. Takes Sontag's dramatic ambivalence toward consciousness as coherent with her dialectical and essayistic method, "an ongoing process of engagement and disburdenment (of self and world)."

Part One: Interpreting the New

"Chapter 1: Interpretations." Comprises three unnumbered segments. (1) Avows interests in the modes of interpretation Sontag targets and in the assumptions underlying her criticism. (2) Describes Sontag's interest in "the Question of the New," and her awareness of the way cultural categories are constructed and maintained, especially when construction involves constriction or exclusion. Takes "Marat/Sade/Artaud" as epitomizing Sontag's (Barthesian) practice of contesting "the nature and authority of the names and meanings forced on art and on experience" and as specifying (a Trilling-esque) "liberal humanism" as the interpretive authority in question. Takes the debate in [A1](#) between Sontag's dreamer-outlaw hero (Hippolyte) and the confessor-interpreter priest (Father Trissotin) as evincing a similar interest in the use of "interpretation as a powerful ideological tool." Compares Sontag to Foucault. Though skeptical "about the ontological certitude of self or truth" and about the univocality of interpretation, Sontag resists Foucault's "ironically totalising" view of "discursive repression." (3) Though "lured" by the "otherness" of early subjects (Camp, Pavese, Weil), there is also "a moral reserve" or detachment discernible in Sontag's coldly analytic tone, derived from "a suspicion of judgment" and "a studied ambivalence about the operations of knowledge," as can be seen in her rejection of the Hegelian totalization implicit in the structuralist formalism of Lévi-Strauss. Takes Sontag's [B19](#) endorsement of the avant-garde and the impersonal in art as at odds with her anxiety about "a culture based on excess" and the denial of the senses. Takes "Notes on 'Camp'" as epitomizing this ambivalence.

"Chapter 2: Erotics." Comprises three unnumbered segments. (1) Though Sontag understands the sense in which artworks "name" the world, her phenomenological criticism allows the "objecthood" of artwork and world, hence the experience of both, all of which is denied in the language-based "structuralist" models employed by Lévi-Strauss and Foucault—hence Sontag's interest in the "new novel," though she is aware that an "absolutely transparent style" is impossible, that art is "a register of consciousness and a product of will." To the extent that will both creates and represents reality, it is grounded in history, is more than mere (formalist) play; her Nietzschean concept of agency, as passion, as subjectivity (vs. as autonomy) privileges experience over language, is in that sense "American." Her "interest in how will is asserted in art is reflected in her attraction to modernists who exude a 'sense of acute personal

and intellectual extremity,” an interest that plays *against* Trilling’s anti-privatist (anti-counterculture) form of liberal humanism and thus allows Sontag “to slight the social genesis and implications of perceptions and ideas.” (2) Ponders the literary aspect of criticism and the critical aspect of avant-garde literature as prologue to a study of Sontag’s rhetorical forms and didactic purposes: her (engaging, disarming) appeals to common sense for the (paradoxical) purpose of destabilizing common perceptions and accepted terminologies; the use of quotation marks to “fictionalize” the relationship of signifier to signified; her “ironic framing” of her arguments in such a way as to render them provisional or indeterminate; her troubling of the writer/reader relationship in *The Benefactor* via its discourse on “truth” and its inside-out ending. Compares Sontag’s preference for “erotics” over “hermeneutics” to Jameson’s “metacommentary”; both derive from the Russian Formalist concept of “defamiliarization.” (3) Though sharing structuralism’s linguistic skepticism, Sontag “does not assent to the primacy of language,” hence the generalized “ambivalence” in her criticism, disavowing interpretation while advocating a will to (an idealized, hence self-contained and nonpolitical) openness.

**Part Two: The Horizons of Silence**

“Chapter 3: Transgression and Transcendence.” Comprises four unnumbered segments. (1) Describes *Styles of Radical Will* as less didactic, more self-consciously analytical and historical *than Against Interpretation*. (2) Characterizes Sontag’s reflexiveness (by comparison with her French contemporaries) as a matter of “standing in the ruins of thought,” a situation of intellectual belatedness one can only go through (rather than retreat from or deny); links this “climate of exhaustion” to the overcoming of metaphysics by history, a loss of immediacy resulting from a (romantic) “fall” into contingency. Compares Sontag’s view of “the aesthetics of silence” to Norman O. Brown’s; though “spirituality” as an aesthetic strategy for overcoming art by anti-art evokes Brown’s call for a recognition of death and the unconscious, Sontag acknowledges that “the abolition of consciousness is not practically achievable,” is at best a compensatory figure of human contingency, limitation. (3) Takes the “ontological implications” of silence as appealing to Sontag despite her description of silence as a (paradoxical) myth; as the silence of the actress in Bergman’s *Persona* is a void into which the nurse expresses (empties) herself, so too is the artwork a void that both tempts and frustrates interpretation along lines evocative of Kant’s meditations on the sublime. Takes “The Pornographic Imagination” as exemplifying Sontag’s pragmatically dialectical approach to the notions of “transgression and transcendence.” Compares Sontag’s view of the “authority” of the modernist artist’s mad outrageousness to Trilling’s; both argue for “strenuousness” and the linking of conscious and unconscious processes in art, though Sontag’s models are chiefly French. But where Bataille’s critique of Hegel’s theory of negation for denying any value to non-reason remains deliberately abstract, Sontag’s is less purely transgressive, is more focused on “transgression as a dialectical tool which can function politically in a world of

power-knowledge relations” where the issue in question is finally “the status of human personality itself.” (4) Claims (à la Jameson) that Sontag’s “attempts to theorise a space of opposition to cultural conditioning of selfhood and consciousness” reflect “as much a desire to be rid of history as to engage it.”

“Chapter 4: Dreams of Silence.” Takes *The Benefactor* “as an extended treatise on subjectivity” in which Sontag’s “key” themes (“engagement/disburdenment, language/silence, and negation/affirmation”) are played out through Hippolyte’s struggle to free himself of the compulsion to words, a “reduction” mimed by the text’s repetitions, its “minimalist narrative development.” Hippolyte’s attempts to deny language are nevertheless frustrated, as if he were the very type of the “mirror stage” Lacanian subject whose attempts to achieve psychological unity and fulfill desire in language are undone by the very differences language enforces and depends upon. A similar undoing of subjectivity is experienced by the reader when Hippolyte-as-narrator reports the discovery of letters and journals that may or may not turn his narrative inside out. All of which is taken as a parody of the narcissistic modernist “solipsism which erases the will to be in the world.” Describes the suicidal “self-cannibalisation” of *Death Kit* by reference to Sartre and Beckett; in each case the sickening spareness or flatness of the perceived (or hallucinated) world “takes on the horror of the arbitrary.” Diddy’s language thus offers only a (repetitive) semblance of meaning, however skillfully he may experiment with the “play” of language to order experience (in the sense that both Incardona and Hester are, finally, defensive projections of the dying Diddy’s psyche). Adduces Sontag’s “Aesthetics of Silence” skepticism regarding the reach of irony to argue that Diddy’s final disappearance into the charnel-house labyrinth of himself should be read as evincing the “absurdity” of an existentialism turned totally inward.

“Chapter 5: Radical Tourism.” Comprises two unnumbered segments. (1) Ponders the relationship between the “Trip to Hanoi” experience that allowed Sontag to incorporate “radical political convictions” into her writing and the “New Journalism” form (part diary, part analysis) her writing eventually assumes. Takes the “diary” section of “Hanoi” as confronting the limits of “cultural difference,” as in Sontag’s (engagingly honest) discomfort with the nonironic “sameness” of Vietnamese political rhetoric. Cites Brecht’s critique of Gide’s “measuring rod” as figuring the process by which Sontag critiques the imaginary logic that renders “Vietnam” a mirror-image victim of American “will.” Takes Sontag’s historical investigation of Vietnamese “will” as “concretising” and thereby validating the local (vs. the reflexively Western) “connotations” of words like “respect” and “sincerity,” thereby providing Sontag “a degree of detachment” from her earlier skepticism, from the misappropriated “Vietnams of the mind and of language” she brought with her. Contrasts Sontag’s “instrumentalist” view of “experience” (which “one repudiates at one’s peril”) with those of Mailer and Lévi-Strauss; both existentialism and structuralism permit “symbolic controversy” to supplant the practices and feelings that make Vietnamese society praiseworthy and beyond recuperation—

as if this excess were revelatory of the limits of language and of the “transformative” power of experience. Compares Sontag’s acceptance of her historical and moral condition to Richard Kearney’s Levinas-inspired analysis of the ethics of imagination. (2) Takes “Trip to Hanoi” as repudiating the desire to repudiate history that animates the “transgressive” aesthetics of Sontag’s novels and early criticism, though this acceptance of contradiction hardly resolves the “conflicting aesthetic and political demands in her work.”

Part Three: The End of History

“Chapter 6: The Life of the Mind.” Takes *Under the Sign of Saturn* as a return to earlier interests in “the ‘uninterpretable’ and Romantic conceptions of artistic creativity and suffering” in which admiration of or identification with isolation becomes the very means of overcoming it. Takes Sontag’s analysis of the “total” work in her Syberberg essay as evincing her interest in the “broken or posthumous” world of Surrealism, as if the ambition toward the total both resulted from and finally yielded fragments. Describes the bare setting of the essay on Paul Goodman as suggestive of disburdenment; takes her focus on Goodman’s “voice” as typical of her search for an authentic feature—with which she can identify. Takes her focus on Artaud’s failure and pain as self-revelatory. Describes the avowedly self-descriptive “partiality” of Sontag’s (other) A15 portraits. Takes her emphasis on the “essayistic” quality of writing and selfhood as betokening the personal quality of her portraits and the “animate” property of ideas—though her “life of the mind” trope is problematic for underplaying the political life that conditions or impinges upon the “interiority” of her exemplary sufferers. Takes “Fascinating Fascism” as a not-altogether-conscious critique of the self-transcending romantic ideals advanced in the other essays. Takes her preference for Syberberg over Riefenstahl as implying an invidious distinction between “elite and mass” taste—to the extent that his “theatre of the mind” interiority allows Sontag to avoid discussing how Syberberg “manipulates his viewers” or “what kind of historical understanding he represents.” Sees Sontag’s unwillingness “to probe too closely the cloistered and acquisitive nature of her idealized ‘life of the mind’” as evincing “a perverse and private effort” to “salvage Romantic ‘grandiosity.’”

“Chapter 7: Photographic Seeing.” Takes A12 as no less autobiographical than Sontag’s other writings. Observes the way Sontag’s “amateur” or “generalist” writerly stance, for which photography becomes a trope of modernism generally, provoked the very institutional authority she attacked. Elaborates Sontag’s concern with the “predatory” aspect of photography—not only for its capacity (like interpretation) to anesthetize the physical senses, but for its capacity to anesthetize our historical sense as well; photography can’t help but “frame” reality, stripping it of context, beautifying it. Takes Sontag’s invocation of Whitman as prefacing a critique of “humanism,” with which both documentary and “art” photography are complicit in their habit of “democratizing and idealizing” perception; even when photographers offer “truth” as their rationale, it amounts to a “class tourism” or “voyeurism” wherein “diversity” supplants

“conflict.” Observes the extent to which, regarding “camp” and surrealism, “an important subtext of [A12] is the bankruptcy of avant-gardism,” especially when photography’s “native” surrealism reduces history to irony and fragments, reduces reality to a consumerist “recycling” of reproductions. Compares Sontag’s ambivalent view of (postmodern) “pluralism” or “indiscrimination” with Hal Foster’s; compares Sontag’s critique of Arbus to her praise of Artaud and Canetti. Compares Berger’s analysis of private and public photography to Sontag’s claim that *all* photographs encourage “dissociative seeing” to the extent that the “eternal presentness” of photography precludes narrative or historical understanding.

“Chapter 8: Debriefings.” Takes Sontag’s short fiction as relating more to her criticism—in that her A14 stories illustrate life lived in a dissociating urban image-world—than to her earlier novels; where “travel” in the novels is an interior journey toward disburdenment, travel in *I, etcetera* tends to parody social detachment and to (anxiously) affirm “acts of human encounter.” Takes “Doctor Jekyll,” “American Spirits,” and “Old Complaints Revisited” as allegorizing, respectively, “Fascinating Fascism” (the relation of leaders to followers), *On Photography* (“the issues of second-hand, dissociated experience”), and “Trip to Hanoi” (the paradox of overstepping language by means of language). A similar “layering” of voices and vantage points in “Debriefing” is taken as urging “the need for some depth of commitment.” Takes “Project for a Trip to China” as asking “how to experience China” in view of the already “overdetermined” trips to China inscribed (as images, objects) in personal and cultural memory. Thus “experience” is as much a matter of reading (decipherment) as of narrating (disburdenment): Sontag’s discontinuous style, employing lists and quotations, invokes “The Aesthetics of Silence” in “decentering” conventional narratives of community or confession, thus sustaining a “dialectical tension between the known and the unknown, between ‘literature and not-literature.’” Takes “Unguided Tour” as an equally successful “convergence” of “the melancholic self and the material world.” Compares Sontag’s A12 discussion of tourism with Jonathan Culler’s. For both, it is the already photographed, the already marked, that tourists recognize as “sights”; there *are* no “unguided” or unmediated tours, not under a “one world” capitalist system. Though the narrator’s tone is “nostalgic, elegiac,” her willingness to go on, or go again (“This is not the end of the world”) recalls “Project” in expressing the desire “to test possibilities of thinking and being otherwise.” Compares A14 to *Under the Sign of Saturn*. While the “stories” in both are parables of intellectual “homelessness,” those in *I, etcetera* (ironically) are less hermetically enclosed within “an idealized ‘life of the mind.’”

“Conclusion: Intellectual/Writer/Secular Critic.” Compares the way Barthes and Sontag take Gide as a model of the “writer-intellectual” to Irving Howe’s description of the typical New York intellectual; though Howe describes Sontag as seeking to abandon modernism, he misses her specifically European loyalties to a “modernism of asceveration” and excess. Takes her devotion to Barthes and

to “the aesthetic sensibility” as valuing the Utopian “suspensiveness of language and literature”—though Sontag’s later work “shows a steadily increasing skepticism” toward the easy “conflation of socio-political and aesthetic concerns.” Notes the paradox by which American intellectuals assert “critical autonomy” while pushing the “professionalisation” of intellectual life, and the extent to which Sontag’s status as a freelance “public intellectual” aligns her with the older “generalist” tradition. Though “self-centered,” Sontag’s writing “is critically illuminating when directed at all that masquerades as natural.”

121 Stead, Arnold Arthur. “Mapping ‘Spiritual Dangers’: The Novels of Susan Sontag.” Ph. D. diss., Univ. of Missouri, 1993. v+381 pp.

This nine-chapter dissertation—in its hypertextual and tropical organization (its reliance on rhetorical questions, say)—quite resists summary. What follows is more like an overview, at considerable distance.

“Chapter 1: Introduction.” Comprises two numbered segments. (1) Adduces H96 on the distinction between New Critical and “Continental” analytical procedures; adduces Coleridge on the incompleteness of the object/subject monad—as if that were the semiotic uncertainty that New Criticism or realist fiction were fixing to fix; adduces Slavoj Žižek on the opposition between the “real” (as unconscious desire) and “reality” (the “fantasy-construct” by which the real is disavowed). Takes A1 and A3 as allegories of this denial. Describes Sontag’s early critical essays in similarly “psychological” terms, as dramatizing “spiritual” longings, as advancing “fantasy” over against “reality” and “realism” and (even) “humanism.” Compares Sontag and Heidegger on the role of the poet; Sontag’s is more wary, more alert to the costs of courting outrage. (2) Forecasts the remaining chapters, paying special attention to the way Sontag’s novels engage concepts of literary genre and gender, the latter often exemplified in a Girardian “play of three” configuration.

“Chapter 2: *The Benefactor*’s Benefactor: A Reading of Susan Sontag’s First Novel.” Comprises two numbered segments. (1) Links Hippolyte’s “eccentricity” (as distance from a social center) to Nietzsche’s concept of “ressentiment” via Jameson, as if eccentricity were ressentiment’s ressentiment, a way of being (happily) “civilized” akin to Hippolyte’s (“asymmetrical,” nonbinary) strategy of acting out (of “choosing” to enact) his dreams. Compares Hippolyte’s understanding of himself (as sanely eccentric) to that of Jean-Jacques, to the effect that Hippolyte’s “rule” is a strategy for avoiding (sexual) feeling. (2) Surveys the reception and criticism of A1 with special reference to Hippolyte’s sanity and his antecedents—in satire, in (psychological) realism, in Romanticism. Resists the claim that A1’s characters collapse into Hippolyte’s singular consciousness; describes the latter’s “onanism” as an “exploration of separateness.” Adduces Basoff (H69) and Sayres (I10a) on the extent of Hippolyte’s freedom and of Sontag’s admiration in order to claim that Hippolyte’s self-deceiving ordering of experience amounts to ressentiment born of/directed toward an oppressively binary gender system.

“Chapter 3: Placing the Blame/Creating an Alibi: The Split in the Narrative Voice of *Death Kit*.” Comprises four numbered segments. (1) Surveys the criticism of A3; raises (refutes) the claim that Sontag’s ideas and story are insufficient to each other. Urges that “Diddy” is a scapegoat character in/of Dalton Harron’s narrative, through which Sontag effectively argues that human consciousness is not “self-contained and autonomous.” Resists reading the narrative (exclusively) as a suicide’s dream-work; prefers to see Hester’s presence at Dalton’s second murder of Incardona as confirming (hence depicting) the deadly ideology of gender. (2) Takes sexuality (and business) as machinelike, deathlike, Hester herself as the “creation of Diddy and Incardona’s union” in the first tunnel scene. Takes the Dalton/Diddy and Hester/Incardona pairings (despite their status as dream-work equivalents) as more real than the sex machine figured by Diddy and Hester (in part because Diddy does not exist to, for, Hester); halting the machine is Sontag’s wish as much as Dalton’s, though each displaces (in Dalton’s case, denies) the wish via a (guilty) surrogate narrator. (3) Ponders A3’s doubled narrative voice as instancing a (Lacanian) madness, in that Diddy seems “whole unto himself,” though he and his world are obviously cut to the measure of another’s (Dalton’s) mimetic, Girardian, desire. But Dalton’s desire is already the Lacanian Other’s desire, does not instance the stasis of Girard’s “internal mediation.” Or rather, instances the violence of desire or will (though that willfulness is often attributed to Sontag, as if it were an avoidable fault) in the logic by which Diddy kills Incardona again and has sex again with Hester, as if Hester were Incardona, as if killing him and screwing her were the same (psychotically masculine) act. (4) Links Diddy to touch (hence to Hester) and Dalton to words, especially to the adverbial “(now).” Takes Dalton’s attempts to control through words as self-reassuring but incompletely effective.

“Chapter 4: *The Benefactor* and *Death Kit* as Companion Pieces.” Reads A1, especially Hippolyte’s first dream, as prefiguring the “the questions of dream-phantasy, eroticism, ritual, and gender” that occupy A3. Takes A1’s dream trio of Hippolyte (as a masculine “he”), the man in black, and the woman in white as betraying Hippolyte’s anxieties about “symmetrical” (hetero)sexuality, an anxiety played out in Hippolyte’s waking life in the figures of Jean-Jacques and Frau Anders, hence Hippolyte’s desire to counter the (discontinuous) violence of time and eros by asserting an onanistic mirror-stage identity of dream-life and day-life. Takes Diddy as similarly “split,” but as seeking relief through (Bataille’s) protective “ecstasy” and (Girard’s) masochistic “sacrifice,” asserting and assuaging his own masculinity by sacrificing Incardona to Hester *and* Hester to Incardona.

“Chapter 5: Unbecoming Men: Edmund Wilson’s *I Thought of Daisy*, Georges Bataille’s *Blue of Noon* and Susan Sontag’s *The Benefactor*.” Comprises two numbered sections. (1) Compares Wilson and Sontag. Takes the nameless narrator of *I Thought of Daisy* as akin to Hippolyte in struggling with masculinity and writing; takes Wilson’s narrator as overtly homophobic, yet his distressed assertion of masculinity does not eschew the social, like Hippolyte’s, via irony.

(2) Compares *Blue of Noon* to *Daisy* and A1—via tropes or themes (Dostoyevsky, mirrors, homosexuality) but chiefly by reference to narrator psychology, in which case Bataille’s Henri Troppmann far exceeds in “outrage” and “excess” and “self-castigation” the other two narrators, and in this exceeds the stasis sought out by Hippolyte.

“Chapter 6: In the American Romantic Pastoral Tradition: Thoreau’s *Walden*, Hemingway’s *In Our Time*, and Sontag’s *The Benefactor*.” Comprises three numbered segments. (1) Adduces Leo Marx on pastoralism (H29); reads A1 (and B37) within/ against that tradition. Takes Hippolyte, like Hemingway’s narrator and Thoreau, as standing opposed to some complex, external (social) reality; in Hippolyte’s case, the “symmetrical” (binary) gender system. But where Thoreau (or Nick Adams) escapes to a (more) natural “symbolic landscape,” where alienation is assuaged by a match of inner and outer experience, Hippolyte escapes to his dreamscape. (2) Adduces the difficulty Hippolyte experiences (especially vis-à-vis Frau Anders) in living out his dreams as troping the difficulty of pastoralism more generally, especially in a postmodern condition; cites the irony of Thoreau’s style, the evasions Hemingway must employ to protect the innocence of Nick Adams, if only by keeping him young, by contrast with the aging Hippolyte who narrates A1. (3) Observes with Marx the inconclusiveness of the pastoral “return” or conclusion—troped in Thoreau via the “dream” figure, in A1 by the “photographic” self-portrait Hippolyte offers at novel’s end.

“Chapter 7: A Naturalist *Kit*: Reading *Death Kit* as an American Naturalist Novel.” Comprises two numbered segments. (1) Adduces Frank Norris and James Farrell in order to describe “naturalism” (à la Balzac, Norris, Dreiser) as a kind of postrealist romanticism; scientific, in that it begins with the (often lower-class) known, but romantic to the extent that it seeks the unknown, the grotesque, the wonderful. Describes naturalism as pedagogical, purposeful, as anti convention and tradition, especially sexual convention. (2) Adduces descriptions and criticisms of naturalism; claims that purported flaws (determinism, pessimism, masculinism) are topics of analysis, are what naturalism dismantles in posing the uncertain (exploratory, existential) “play of three” against the nature/culture duo, a play of three of which *Death Kit* evidences the failure, to the extent that Dalton replicates (brutal) gender categories by making Diddy his scapegoat surrogate. Compares A3 and O’Connor’s *Wise Blood* to demonstrate the psychoanalytic inheritance of naturalism.

“Chapter 8: Susan Sontag’s Romance Collection: A Reading of *The Volcano Lover*.” Defines “Romance” via Frye, Hawthorne, Kundera, James; equates romance with experimentation, imagination, the possible (vs. realism’s “probable”). Takes Sontag’s collection of “pronouncements on women” as evincing the symbolic gender system, implicitly critiquing its naturalized status, “but it is at this point that Sontag the novelist pulls in her horns” by giving Eleonora only a few pages to make the criticism explicit. Takes Sontag’s

professed affection for her characters as denying the extent of their self-disgust, itself troped by their “walking-in-place” habits of collecting and self-display. Takes the novel’s four concluding monologues as collecting various female (or feminist) attitudes toward gender that, as it were, under-cut the “play of three” romance of the novel’s earlier sections, though their (quasi-) historical status can be taken either as demystification or as apologetic excuse.

“Chapter 9: In Conclusion: Susan Sontag’s Novels: A Marriage of Gender and Genre.” Reiterates the way Sontag’s novels raise questions of fact and fiction, of male and female. Where [A1](#) and [A3](#) are about the dynamics and uncertainties of gender, [A28](#) is more interesting for its ambiguous relation to “the ironies of gender.” Takes *Death Kit* as the novel least comfortable with the “play of three” model. Revises Sontag’s [B5](#) distinction between lovers and husbands to include fathers (and collectors) on the side of “reliability”; reviews the novels with this rubric in mind, as parables of split subjectivity. Considers each of the novels as “some variety of romance,” with special reference to the homosocial aspects of the genre as elaborated in [A3](#). Adduces Arnold and Blake on the “nourishing” side of romanticism; describes [A1](#) and [A3](#) as parables of self-deception, parables damned by Eleonora’s “Damn them all” attack on solitude, however “conservative” Sontag’s handling of genre may (finally) be in [A28](#).

## SECTION J

### Reviews

#### THE BENEFACTOR (A1)

J1 Hicks, Granville. "To Act, Perforce to Dream." *Saturday Review*, 7 Sept. 1963, 17–8.

Compares the straightforwardness of Cleland's *Memoirs of a Woman of Pleasure* to the A1 implication—via Hippolyte's confusion of waking and dreaming—"that personality is mysterious" and reality enigmatic as posing the question of modern fiction generally: "Why do we bother to read it?"

J2 Stern, Daniel. "Life Becomes a Dream." *New York Times Book Review*, 8 Sept. 1963, 5.

Describes A1 as a typical ("abstract," "unfleshed") *roman nouveau*: "It has been said of the French that they develop an idea and then assume it is the world. Hippolyte has decided that *he* is the world, and has proceeded to explore it."

J3 "Identifiable as Prose." *Time*, 13 Sept. 1963, 112, 114.

J4 Wain, John. "Song of Myself." *New Republic*, 21 Sept. 1963, 26–7, 30.

Claims that *The Benefactor*—by contrast with American realism or metaphysicalism—"concentrates instead on itself." Because such "preoccupation with identity disintegrates identity," Hippolyte's world is abstract, antipsychological—in that sense instances "the Europeanization of America."

J5 Frakes, James R. "Where Dreaming Is Believing." *Book Week (New York Herald Tribune)*, 22 Sept. 1963, 10.

Takes A1's "frustratingly precise design" as betokening Sontag's Kafkaesque attempt to "stretch the frontiers of imagination." Notes the multiple incarnations of the novel's "remarkable" narrative voice, which makes A1 seem "a dance more than a narrative."

J6 Adams, Robert M. "Nacht und Tag." *New York Review of Books*, 17 Oct. 1963, 19.

Compares Sontag's portrait "of a mind lost in its own intricate dialectic" to *Candide*, though Sontag lacks Voltaire's amusingly "sharp sword of comedy."

J7 Phelps, Donald. "Form as Hero." *New Leader*, 28 Oct. 1963, 24–5.

J8 Flint, Robert W. *Commentary*, Dec. 1963, 489–92.

Takes Sontag's "feminine" critique "of the 'European' inversions of humanitarian realism" as welcome antidote to the "quasi-military" worlds of Mailer, Baldwin, and Heller.

J9 Madden, David. "The Benefactor." In *Masterplots 1964 Annual*, edited by Frank N. Magill and Dayton Kohler, 16–21. New York: Salem Press, 1964.

Discusses the (European) inheritance of [A1](#); Jean-Jacques as the mirror-image double of Hippolyte, as also of the reader; Frau Anders as the "most important person in Hippolyte's life and dreams"; Hippolyte's (narcissistic) dream life and his eviction from it; the reader's "eviction" from the story by means of its (textual) double(s).

J9a "The Benefactor." In *Survey of Contemporary Literature*, Vol. 1, edited by Frank N. Magill and Dayton Kohler, 365–70. New York: Salem Press, 1971.

J9b "The Benefactor." In *Survey of Contemporary Literature*, rev. ed., Vol. 1, edited by Frank N. Magill, 637–42. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Salem Press, 1977.

J10 Bush, Geoffrey. "Some Recent Fiction." *Yale Review* 53 (Winter 1964):298–301.

Looks at recent novels in terms of "how much of the world they hang on to." In Hippolyte's case, very little.

J11 Sale, Roger. "The Newness of the Novel." *Hudson Review* 16 (Winter 1963–64):601–9.

J12 Brown, Marion Marsh. "'Of Ships and Shoes...' and Books." *Prairie Schooner* 38.1 (Spring 1964):88–9.

J13 Howard, Richard. "Two Firsts." *Partisan Review* 31 (Summer 1964):456–61.

Describes [A1](#) as avoiding "even the semblance" of life's social surface by recourse to a "varnished" prose and to an "internationalism" of the imagination in which characters and events "collapse into each other like telescope joints."

J14 "Proper Self Love." *TLS*, 7 May 1964, 389.

J15 Winegarten, Renee. "Innocence and Eccentricity." *Jewish Observer and Middle East Review*, 8 May 1964, 18–9.

J16 Bradbury, Malcolm. "The Various Styles of Silence." *Punch*, 15 July 1964, 101.

\*\*\* Conrad, Peter. "Dark Lady of Letters." *Observer* (London), 19 June 1983, 31.

See [J315](#).

BRIEF REVIEWS: *Library Journal*, 1 Sept. 1963, 3104; *New Yorker*, 26 Oct. 1963, 218–9; *Virginia Quarterly Review* 40 (Winter 1964):x; *Critic* (Dec. 1963–

Jan. 1964):93; *Observer* (London), 5 June 1966, 22; *Book World* (*Washington Post*), 7 Jan. 1979, E2.

### AGAINST INTERPRETATION (A2)

J17 Hayman, David. *7 Books Abroad* 40.4 (1966):461.

A2 “states as clearly and as zestfully as one could hope the condition of the present as the future.”

J18 Feldman, Burton. “Evangelist of the New.” *Denver Quarterly* No. 1 (Spring 1966):152–6.

Describes Sontag as exemplifying “that strenuously intellectual American woman” possessed of “a quick mind” and an “inability to stop nagging.” Takes her attack on content as promising “that a good method” will “straighten out every problem” by transforming whatever is “unbearably revolutionary in art” into transparent “form.”

J19 Behar, Jack. “Against the Self.” *Hudson Review* 19 (Summer 1966):347–52.

Takes A2’s emphasis on “immanence” as evincing a “deep disinclination to believe any longer in the self of psychoanalysis,” while noting how the works Sontag praises (Bresson’s films) argue her own brand of “rigorous anti-romanticism.” Sees Sontag advocating a “new sensibility” as if in ignorance of the way “modern culture conspires to outmode and constantly generate new modes of sensibility.”

J20 Brooks, Peter. “Parti Pris.” *Partisan Review* 33 (Summer 1966): 439–43.

Sees A2’s twin “impulsions”—toward the Dionysic and the ascetic—as converging “in their resistance to interpretation”; sees Sontag’s formal criticism as most successful in describing instances of “the least discursive” media (e.g., film), her aesthetic logic as undermined by a weak understanding of Anglo-American criticism, which is “far more descriptive, and less interpretive than Miss Sontag thinks.”

J21 Phelps, Robert. “Self-Education of a Brilliant Highbrow.” *Life*, 21 Jan. 1966, 8, 10.

J22 DeMott, Benjamin. “Lady on the Scene.” *New York Times Book Review*, 23 Jan. 1966, 5, 32.

Concludes that A2 is a “vivacious, beautifully living and quite astonishingly American book” chiefly by reference to the “Self-lacerating Puritan” who is its first-person narrator, a figure “clear enough in outline” to answer the question of “who needs the new art and why?”

J23 Sypher, Wylie. “That Good Bad Taste in Our Mouths.” *Book Week* (*New York Herald Tribune*), 30 Jan. 1966, 2.

Cites approvingly Sontag’s willingness to maintain (some) standards, while describing her as “too severe” in her criticism of the novel. Links the “liberating agnosticism” of A2 to A1 via the concepts of banality and stylization.

J24 Davis, Douglas M. "Instant Syntopicon: Miss Sontag, The Compleat Critic, Is Very Much of the Here and Now." *National Observer*, 31 Jan. 1966, 23.

J25 Levensohn, Alan. "Codifying What's 'In.'" *Christian Science Monitor*, 3 Feb. 1966, 7.

J26 Pryce-Jones, Alan. "A Book That Has Camp and Fires Bright Fuses." *New York Herald Tribune*, 3 Feb. 1966, 19.

J27 Baumbach, Jonathan. "A Plea for Art Unexplicated." *Saturday Review*, 12 Feb. 1966, 33.

J28 Howard, Richard. "Toward Cancellation of the Self." *New Leader*, 14 Feb. 1966, 22, 24–5.

Compares A2 to Cocteau's *Le Coq et l'Arlequin*, as moving toward something that barely exists, that is only evident in those "disclosures of the *appearance of withdrawal*" in the authors Sontag writes about, that "parallel her own...quest for the cancellation of the self." Though she acknowledges the contemporary "banality" that "refuses to be interpreted," doing so requires "brushing in the very canvas" of cultural reference "she wants to slash through."

J29 Stevens, Elisabeth. "Miss Camp Herself." *New Republic*, 19 Feb. 1966, 24–6.

Attacks Sontag's call for an "erotics of art" as echoing "the ideally disinterested aesthetic approach to life" typical of fascism or its collaborators (Pavese) and of "androgynes" (Jack Smith, Genet) as well.

J30 Sullivan, Richard. "Appraisal of the Arts." *Books Today (Chicago Tribune)*, 20 Feb. 1966, 12.

Finds A2 "difficult to take" because its defense of the avantgarde is "so dogmatic, so condescending."

J31 Samuels, Charles Thomas. "Contra Sontag." *Nation*, 21 Feb. 1966, 219–21.

J32 Ricks, Christopher. "Streamline Babies." *New Statesman*, 4 Mar. 1966, 300.

Reviews Wolfe's *The Kandy-Kolored Tangerine-Flake Streamline Baby* and, briefly, A2. (Quotes a passage about "taste" from a Sontag appearance on the BBC.)

J33 Dobbs, Kildare. "Making It New with Susan." *Saturday Night (Toronto)*, Apr. 1966, 35–6.

J34 Sklar, Robert. "Culture and Cant." *Progressive*, Apr. 1966, 45–6.

Contrasts Sontag and Trilling; where he takes the institutionalized "No" of modernist culture as political, hence dangerous, she enacts a politicized aesthetic by advocating one strain of adversarial culture (the New York "new sensibility") against an older moral-political modern art tradition.

J35 Bims, Hamilton. "Books Noted." *Negro Digest* 15 (May 1966): 51–2.

J36 Duffy, Dennis. "Form without Content?" *Canadian Forum*, June 1966, 69–70.

J37 Ostriker, Alicia. "Anti-Critic." *Commentary*, June 1966, 83–4.

Takes A2 as evincing the “anti-rationalist superstition” that intellect is “indirectly responsible” for our “contemporary fix.” Counters that the antidote to pedantry is not a new sensibility or new objects but a greater exercise of intelligence in interpreting the art experiences we (already) have.

J37a Excerpts. In *Contemporary Literary Criticism*, Vol. 31, edited by Jean C. Stine and Daniel G. Marowski, 405–6. Detroit: Gale Research, 1985.

J38 Freedman, Richard. *Kenyon Review* 28 (Nov. 1966):709–10.

A2 “occupies the same place in criticism that *Vogue’s* latest pronouncements about the miniskirt occupy in another, apparently related, world of fashion.”

J39 Alvarez, A. “Never on Sontag.” *Spectator*, 10 Mar. 1967, 280–1.

Takes “Notes on ‘Camp’” less as vindicating minority art than as a “counsel of despair” that pop art hardly needs.

J40 Moynahan, Julian. “Makers and Shakers.” *Observer* (London), 12 Mar. 1967, 27.

Sets H.M. Enzensberger’s critique of avant-gardism (in *Modern Occasions*) against A2b. Scores Sontag’s “market research” approach to art for avoiding “questions of value.”

J41 “—And Sunday Morning.” *TLS*, 16 Mar. 1967, 215.

Takes Sontag’s “unsensual mode of thought” as evidence that her “bent” is theoretical (or technical) rather than critical.

J42 Furbank, P.N. “For the Contemporary.” *Listener*, 16 Mar. 1967, 364.

J43 Green, Martin. “The New Clerks’ Treasons.” *Manchester Guardian Weekly*, 16 Mar. 1967, 11.

Takes Sontag as representing the avant-garde (and anticensorship) “New Clerks” under attack in Pamela Hansford Johnson’s anti-porn polemic *On Iniquity*.

J44 Nairn, Tom. “The New Sensibility.” *New Statesman*, 24 Mar. 1967, 408–9.

Understands Sontag’s A2b antipathy to “content” as “special pleading for a certain *sort* of art,” the content-less kind that, far from being transparent, “urgently” needs critical elaboration.

J45 Pendleton, Dennis. “Against Interpretation.” In *Masterplots 1967 Annual*, edited by Frank N. Magill and Dayton Kohler, 5–8. New York: Salem Press, 1968.

Notes the paradox by which Sontag essays a large-scale history/theory of artistic meaning while disavowing interpretation of individual works.

J45a “Against Interpretation.” In *Survey of Contemporary Literature*, Vol. 1, edited by Frank N. Magill and Dayton Kohler, 84–7. New York: Salem Press, 1971.

J46 Cawelti, John. *American Quarterly* 20 (Summer 1968):254–9.

Contrasts Sontag's "new sensibility" to the "mass culture" criticism of Dwight Macdonald and Raymond Williams. Concludes that "breaking down the walls of snobbery, elitism and status" is so desirable as to "outweigh any threat to the great tradition of the arts."

J47 Justus, James H. "Some New Criticism: Crotchets and Others." *Southern Review*, n.s., 4 (Jan. 1968):252–8.

Praises Sontag for her "useful" and "steady-eyed exposition of a critical stance" in [A2](#), especially her defense of an aesthetic of "neutrality" that is "beyond indignation."

J48 Ponce, Fernando. Review of *Contra la interpretación. Estafeta literaria* (Madrid) No. 435 (1 Jan. 1970):244.

Praises Sontag's "fresh" and "audacious" challenge to accepted critical practice in [A2h](#) as a model for a "new type" of Spanish essay writing.

J49 Marín Morales, José Alberto. Review of *Contra la interpretación. Arbor* (Madrid) 75 (Dec. 1970):104–7.

Praises the rich amplitude and concreteness of Sontag's phenomenological sensibility.

J50 Grimm, Reinhold. "Rezensionen, Kurzverrisse und eine kulinarische Rühmung: Zur Kritik westdeutscher Prosa um 1970." *Text und Kontext* (Copenhagen) 6.1–2 (1978):401–15.

Praises Sontag's range of interests and energies in [A2e](#); notes the "untranslatability" of "sensibility." Takes Sontag's antipathy to interpretation as self-defeating; sees value in her picture of art and literature as mental "aphrodisiac."

J51 Fuller, G. Review of *Kunst und Antikunst: 24 literarische Analysen. Tijdschrift voor filosofie* (Leuven) 44 (1982):761–2.

Adduces the "classic" aspect of Sontag's mid-1960s essays, even circa 1980, though the past evoked in [A2m](#) is less that of the 1960s avant-garde than of the 1920s.

J52 May, Charles E. "Against Interpretation and Other Essays." In *Masterplots II: Non Fiction Series*, Vol. 1, edited by Frank N. Magill, 19–23. Pasadena, CA: Salem Press, 1989.

Praises Sontag's prescient engagement with continental literary and cultural theory, her avant-garde emphasis on form and experience over content and interpretation; ponders her "rejection by the academic critical establishment."

BRIEF REVIEWS: *Virginia Kirkus' Service*, 1 Dec. 1965, 1210–1; *Library Journal*, 1 Feb. 1966, 698; *Booklist and Subscription Books Bulletin*, 1 Mar. 1966, 649; *Vogue*, Apr. 1966, 110; *Canadian Art* 23.3 (July 1966):56–7; *Choice*, July-Aug. 1966, 419; *Choice*, Mar. 1973, 26–40 (see p. 29); *New York Times Book Review*, 15 Feb. 1987, 38; *Observer* (London), 14 June 1987, 22; *New Statesman*, 17 July 1987, 30–1.

## DEATH KIT (A3)

J53 “Did He?” *Time*, 18 Aug. 1967, 86, 88.

Describes A3 as a “modernistic” conundrum whose subject is too obviously “alienation” and whose arduous author is “always at the reader’s elbow.”

J54 Fremont-Smith, Eliot. Books of The Times (“Diddy Did It—Or Did He?”). *New York Times*, 18 Aug. 1967, 31.

Ponders how someone as “refined” as Sontag “can write fiction that is both tedious and insensitive to the craft of fiction.”

J55 Davis, Douglas M. “Turning to the Novel, Miss Sontag Flits between Dream and Reality.” *National Observer*, 21 Aug. 1967, 21.

J56 Grumbach, Doris. *America*, 26 Aug. 1967, 207.

Praises A3 as “real art” because as “a masterpiece of surrealism” it is “extremely unnerving.”

J57 Hicks, Granville. “Guessing Game for Everyman.” *Saturday Review*, 26 Aug. 1967, 25–6.

Describes A3 as similar to A1 by virtue of its unstable narrator and narration, the process of which equates storytelling with self-destruction and death.

J58 DeMott, Benjamin. “Diddy or Didn’t He?” *New York Times Book Review*, 27 Aug. 1967, 1–2, 30.

Takes Diddy as a portrait of Sontag’s “*kitsch* existentialist” audience; he is “one of us” who “is or ought to be dead” for the “white race” sins of imperialist ecological aggression. Also takes Diddy as a self-portrait of a writer “bent on transforming self-hatred into an instrument of objective analysis.”

J59 Kroll, Jack. “Diddy the Dead.” *Newsweek*, 28 Aug. 1967, 80.

J60 Rosenthal, Raymond. “Death as a Middle-Class Hobby.” *New Leader*, 28 Aug. 1967, 14–5.

J61 Greenfield, Josh. *Village Voice*, 31 Aug. 1967, 6, 8.

Describes A3’s dream-within-a-death structure as “a black and bleak Tristram Shandy in reverse.”

J62 Pickrel, Paul. “A Stegner, a MacLennan, and a Sontag.” *Harper’s Magazine*, Sept. 1967, 118, 120.

Notes A3’s evocation of an “indeterminate zone between ordinary reality and hallucination” only to aver that Sontag “is most successful when she sticks closest to traditional novelistic methods.”

J63 Maddocks, Melvin. “Stirring the Fog Slowly with Susan Sontag.” *Christian Science Monitor*, 7 Sept. 1967, 11.

Avows that Sontag “seems more relaxed—in fact, more imaginative—as a critic than as a novelist.”

J64 Vidal, Gore. “The Writer as Cannibal.” *Book World (Chicago Tribune)*, 10 Sept. 1967, 5, 34.

Praises Sontag’s reading in continental literature, by contrast with the provincialism more typical of American writers, though it is the very

adventurousness of her “literary borrowings” in A3 that obscures “her own natural talents.”

- J64a “Miss Sontag’s Second New Novel.” In *Reflections upon a Sinking Ship*, 41–7. Boston: Little, Brown & Co.; Toronto: Little, Brown & Co. (Canada), 1969.
- J64b “Miss Sontag’s New Novel.” In *Homage to Daniel Shays: Collected Essays 1952–1972*, 295–301. New York: Random House; Toronto: Random House of Canada, 1972.
- J64c Excerpts. In *Contemporary Literary Criticism*, Vol. 2, edited by Carolyn Riley and Barbara Harte, 413–4. Detroit: Gale Research, 1974.
- J64d “Miss Sontag’s New Novel.” In *Twentieth-Century American Literature*, Vol. 6, The Chelsea House Library of Literary Criticism, edited by Harold Bloom, 3724–6. New York, 1987.
- J64e “Miss Sontag’s New Novel.” In *United States: Essays 1952–1992*, 375–9. New York: Random House; Toronto: Random House of Canada; London: Andre Deutsch, 1993.

J65 Donoghue, Denis. “Sweepstakes.” *New York Review of Books*, 28 Sept. 1967, 5–6, 8.

Compares A3 to A1 and P.F.Strawson’s *Individuals* in order to elaborate the paradox by which disburdenment becomes altogether burdensome for obliterating the exterior world.

J66 Muggeridge, Malcom. Books. *Esquire*, Oct. 1967, 80, 82, 84.

J67 Koch, Stephen. “Sontag: Shaking the Tree of Death.” *Nation*, 2 Oct. 1967, 310–1.

Links A1, A2, and A3 via the themes of “terrorism and banality.” Takes Sontag’s satiric treatment of banality and suicide as evincing a triumph of classicism over Baudelairean release, yet Sontag’s interest in suffering and death remains A3’s distinguishing feature.

J68 Sklar, Robert. “A Death in Theory.” *Reporter*, 5 Oct. 1967, 52.

J69 Sheed, Wilfred. “Susan Sontag as Dandy Schoolmarm-Novelist.” *Commonweal*, 20 Oct. 1967, 89–90.

Interprets *Death Kit* as “a fictional gloss” on Sontag’s B29 critique of America. Regards A3 as “a quarry that can be returned to, as one does not return to the new Roth or Styron.”

J70 Degnan, James. “The Empress’ New Clothes.” *Critic* 26.2 (Oct.–Nov. 1967):74–6.

J71 Krupat, Arnold. “Did He or Didn’t He?” *New Catholic World*, Dec. 1967, 138–9.

J72 Kriegel, Leonard. “The Soldiers of General McLuhan.” *Dimensions in American Judaism* 2.2 (Winter 1967–68):48–50.

Observes how Sontag and Mailer (among others) “have managed to create literary personages” that threaten “to subsume their works.” Praises the originality of A3 while pondering its “horrific vision.”

J73 Sale, Roger. “Good Servants and Bad Masters.” *Hudson Review* 20 (Winter 1967–68):666–74.

Praises A3 for “its frigidity, its extraordinary (and fatal) belief in itself, its lack of the usual densities of fiction.”

J74 Lehan, Richard. “Fiction 1967.” *Contemporary Literature* 9 (Autumn 1968):538–53.

Avows that recent fiction has “gone mad” in its subject matter and subthemes (political assassination, homosexuality) and (in some cases) its “anti-realistic” technique. *Death Kit* is described as “a philosophical *tour de force*” à la Sartre, though an “inchoate” narrator yields an inchoate narrative.

J75 Williams, David. “New Fiction.” *Punch*, 24 Apr. 1968, 618.

J76 “Diddy?” *TLS*, 25 Apr. 1968, 441.

Despairs at Sontag’s inability to add “a bit of flesh to the sharp bones of her mind.”

J77 Furbank, P.N. “Two Hells.” *Listener*, 25 Apr. 1968, 548–9.

Observes an “odd hitch” or split in Sontag’s relationship to pleasure and her narrative relationship to Diddy.

J78 Reynolds, Stanley. “Dreaming.” *New Statesman*, 26 Apr. 1968, 555–6.

Evokes Sontag interviewing Andy Warhol on BBC television as prologue to declaring A3a “the most interesting new novel to come from a young American since Kerouac’s *On the Road*,” though its success at eluding interpretation via its “clear, blunt, forceful” style is more evocative of Nabokov.

J79 Wilding, Michael. *London Magazine*, June 1968, 112–4.

J80 Pendleton, Dennis. “Death Kit.” In *Masterplots 1968 Annual* edited by Frank N. Magill and Dayton Kohler, 72–4. New York: Salem Press, 1969.

Takes A3 as exemplifying Sontag’s A2 case for the *nouveau roman*, as less “statement” than “experience”; takes Diddy as too ordinary an antihero, Sontag as too influenced by the zero-degree style of Camus; takes the novel’s ending to be “as bracing as a cold shower” in its mixture of the “horrible and commonplace” and its return to the scene(s) of the crime.

J80a “Death Kit.” In *Survey of Contemporary Literature*, Vol. 2, edited by Frank N. Magill and Dayton Kohler, 1092–5. New York: Salem Press, 1971.

J80b “Death Kit.” In *Survey of Contemporary Literature*, rev. ed., Vol. 3, edited by Frank N. Magill, 1817–20. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Salem Press, 1977.

J81 Perez Minik, Domingo. “Susan Sontag nos cuenta una ordalía histórica.” *Insula* (Madrid) Nos. 275–6 (Oct.–Nov. 1969):21.

Takes **A3** as evincing the “maturity” or “crisis” of literary decadence; implicitly links the endgame of the novel to Sontag’s antistructuralist attempt to escape content; compares **A3** negatively to recent American literature, while allowing some thematic similarity to Twain and Melville.

J82 Halio, Jay L. “The Way It Is—And Was.” *Southern Review*, n.s., 6 (Jan. 1970):250–62.

Adduces the contrast between realism and romance in considering recently published novels. Links **A3**’s themes of obsession over money and sex to “the problem of *gnosis*” à la D.H. Lawrence and Martin Buber.

BRIEF REVIEWS: *Publishers Weekly*, 12 June 1967, 58; *Kirkus Service*, 15 June 1967, 712; *Library Journal*, Aug. 1967, 2812; *Atlantic*, Sept. 1967, 132; *Best Sellers*, 1 Sept. 1967, 219; *Antiquarian Bookman*, 4–11 Sept. 1967, 844; *Booklist and Subscription Books Bulletin*, 1 Nov. 1967, 319; *America*, 25 Nov. 1967, 666; *Virginia Quarterly Review* 44 (Winter 1968):viii, xiv; *Observer* (London), 21 Apr. 1968, 28; *Publishers Weekly*, 12 Aug. 1968, 57; *Choice*, Jan. 1969, 1246; *Punch*, 1 Jan. 1969, 34; *Book World (Washington Post)*, 7 Jan. 1979, **E2**; *New York Times Book Review*, 15 Feb. 1987, 38.

#### TRIP TO HANOI (A4)

J83 Mitgang, Herbert. Books of The Times (“Victory in the Ashes of Vietnam?”). *New York Times*, 4 Feb. 1969, 37.

**A4** is “worth reading because it blows the mind’s cobwebs.”

J84 FitzGerald, Francis. “A Nice Place to Visit.” *New York Review of Books*, 13 Mar. 1969, 28–31.

Reviews Mary McCarthy’s *Hanoi* and Sontag’s **A4**, emphasizing their struggles to confront the seldom-acknowledged “foreignness” of the North Vietnamese.

J85 Lockwood, Lee. “Book Marks: Trips to Hanoi.” *Nation*, 24 Mar. 1969, 374–7.

Praises Sontag’s ability to communicate “not what we have done to Vietnam but what Vietnam has done to [her].”

J86 Shaw, Peter. “Sentimental Journeys.” *Commentary*, July 1969, 84, 87–8.

Describes Mary McCarthy’s *Hanoi* and **A4** as renouncing alike “the complexities of critical thinking” in a desire “to bear witness” against the United States; sees the result as “damaging to the anti-war cause” for generating “mistrust” of its advocates.

BRIEF REVIEWS: *Antioch Review* 29 (Spring 1969):110–1; *Booklist*, 1 Feb. 1969, 575; *Library Journal*, 1 Feb. 1969, 557.

#### STYLES OF RADICAL WILL (A5)

J87 Leonard, John. “Susan Sings in a Lonely Thicket.” *Life*, 28 Mar. 1969, 12.

Describes Sontag as “a deracinated urban griefchik” who seeks “a radical connection between esthetics and politics.”

J88 Freedman, Richard. “Like Talk at a Terribly Serious Cocktail Party.” *Book World (Washington Post)*, 20 Apr. 1969, 5.

J89 Lehmann-Haupt, Christopher. Books of The Times (“Susan Sontag and the Life of the Mind”). *New York Times*, 2 May 1969, 41.

Sees A5 as split between an abstract critical intelligence unwilling to “commit... to metaphor” and a political mind too ready to describe America as “the cancer of human history.”

J90 Capouya, Emile. “The Age of Allegiance.” *Saturday Review*, 3 May 1969, 29.

Describes “the Sontag Situation” as a late phase in the “fragmentation” of character begun in the Renaissance, of which Sontag’s A5 divorce of art and morality is exemplary, though she is praised for lapses “into sense and taste.”

J91 “Dark Lady of the Tuned-in.” *Time*, 9 May 1969, 108, 111–2, 114.

J92 Sklar, Robert. “Consciousness Confrontation.” *Nation*, 2 June 1969, 704–5, 707.

Takes “consciousness” and its “radical” discontents as A5’s theme, though a shift from attempting to “escape consciousness” via art (à la Norman O. Brown) to a hope of attaining new forms of consciousness via politics (à la Jean-Luc Godard) seems implicit in the order of the essays.

J93 McGlinchee, Claire. *America*, 21 June 1969, 713–4.

J94 Bensky, Lawrence M. “Susan Sontag, Indignant, Stoical, Complex, Useful—and Moral.” *New York Times Book Review*, 13 July 1969, 5, 45.

J95 Berek, Peter. “Susan Sontag’s Private Line to the Absolute.” *Commonweal*, 10 Oct. 1969, 48–9.

Praises Sontag’s “practical criticism” for allowing “experience” primacy over “abstract expectation.”

J96 Weightman, John. “High Modernist Critic.” *Observer* (London), 30 Nov. 1969, 34.

Discusses the paradox by which “Will=Not Will” in the A5a title; applauds “The Aesthetics of Silence” and “The Pornographic Imagination”; wonders if the virtues Sontag sees in Bergman and Godard are not better seen as limitations.

J97 Rhode, Eric. “Reliving the Diaspora.” *Listener*, 4 Dec. 1969, 805, 807.

Describes Sontag’s self-abnegating “apocalyptic” sensibility in A5a and E2. Compares her “defeatism” to Virginia Woolf’s; takes Sontag’s “unending flow of rationalisations” as covering an “immaturity of emotion.” Praises “Trip to Hanoi” for confronting the dilemma.

J98 Raban, Jonathan. “The Uncourtly Muse.” *New Statesman*, 12 Dec. 1969, 866–7.

Likens Emerson and Sontag via their shared propensity for “the casserole style of essay writing” and for a vocabulary taken from a “melange of modernist cult jargons.”

J99 Mitchell, Julian. "Stance and Substance." *Guardian Weekly* (Manchester), 13 Dec. 1969, 19.

J100 Mablekos, Carole. "Styles of Radical Will." In *Masterplots 1970 Annual* edited by Frank N. Magill and Dayton Kohler, 294–7. New York: Salem Press, 1970.

Describes A5 as a call for "radical" thinking in the realms of philosophy, aesthetics, and politics lest we succumb to "the dangers of intellectual and moral stagnation."

J101 Houston, Gary. "Susan Sontag." *Michigan Quarterly Review* 9 (Fall 1970): 272–5.

Notes the tension between a Godardian aesthetic of destruction and the "conservatively discriminate" practice of Sontag's own essays. Critiques Sontag's habits of irony, while expressing (ironic) doubts about her ability to expand her political or historical frame of reference.

J102 "To the End of Thought." *TLS*, 8 Jan. 1970, 26.

Takes film, judging by her chapters on Bergman and Godard, to be the "end" toward which Sontag's fierce thinking leads.

J103 Thomas, Edward. "Selected Books." *London Magazine*, Feb. 1970, 108–13.

Takes A5a as instancing how a (Sartrean) "will" to "radical style" effects a totalizing rejection of cultural tradition, which leaves one "awaiting salvation from outside," which is itself an "established track for our Western consciousness."

J104 Fox, Christopher. "Understanding and Insight." *Studio International* (London), Mar. 1970, 135–6.

Takes "Reflections on Cioran," especially its paradoxical emphasis on "the consuming nature of thought itself," as offering "the clearest perspective" on Sontag's "own sensibility and attitudes," though her verbal brilliance, like Cioran's, tends to "degenerate into mere attitudinising."

J105 Dodsworth, Martin. "Uses of Literacy." *Encounter*, June 1970, 75–80.

Observes the disjunction between Sontag's avant-garde subject matter and her more traditionally essayistic style.

BRIEF REVIEWS: *Virginia Quarterly Review* 45 (Autumn 1969): cliv; *Publishers Weekly*, 13 Jan. 1969, 90; *Kirkus Reviews*, 15 Jan. 1969, 89; *Library Journal*, 15 Feb. 1969, 762; *Christian Century*, 7 May 1969, 652; *AB Bookman's Weekly*, 2 June 1969, 2119; *Booklist and Subscription Books Bulletin*, 15 July 1969, 1242; *Nation*, 22 Dec. 1969, 702–3; *American Libraries*, Jan. 1970, 91; *Choice*, Mar. 1970, 56; *Choice*, Mar. 1973, 26–40 (see p. 29).

### DUET FOR CANNIBALS (E2 AND A6)

J106 Manns, Torsten. "Festivalen som inget lärt." *Chaplin* 91 (1969): 191–5.

Describes E2 as an impossible and inferior blending of *Dr. Mabuse* and 1940s-style Swedish films.

J107 Mosk[owitz, G.]. "Duett for Kannibaler." *Variety*, 21 May 1969, 18.

"The pic is a witty, madcap, free-wheeling generally entertaining affair even if any interpretation is out."

J107a "Duett For Kannibaler." In *Variety Film Reviews 1968–1970*, 21 May 1969. New York: Garland Publishing, 1983.

J108 Edström, Mauritz. "'Duett för kannibaler': Svart fars i trögt tempo." *Dagens Nyheter* (Stockholm), 25 Sept. 1969, 25.

Describes E2 as "black farce" so turned in upon itself that no connection with a world outside is possible.

J109 Greenspun, Roger. "Susan Sontag's 'Duet for Cannibals' at Festival." *New York Times*, 25 Sept. 1969, 51.

J109a "Screen: Sontag's 'Duet for Cannibals.'" *New York Times*, 15 Oct. 1969, 39.  
Excerpts J109.

J109b "Susan Sontag's 'Duet for Cannibals' at Festival." In *The New York Times Film Reviews 1969–1970*, 78. New York: The New York Times & Arno Press, 1971.

J110 Hjertén, Hanserik. "Duett för Vem?" *Svenska Dagbladet* (Stockholm), 25 Sept. 1969.

Describes E2 as "neither creepy nor enjoyable."

\*J111 Schildt, Jurgen. *AB* (Stockholm), 25 Sept. 1969.

Cited in K69.

J112 Sima, Jonas. "Tråkigaste filmdebuten i Sverige." *Expressen* (Stockholm), 25 Sept. 1969.

Declares E2 the "grayest and boringest film debut in Sweden since Jörn Donner's *En söndag i september*."

J113 "Festivals: Distributors' Showcase." *Time*, 26 Sept. 1969, 94, 96.

J114 Tuten, Frederic. Vogue's Spotlight: Movies ("Duet for Cannibals: 'Misleading'"). *Vogue*, 15 Oct. 1969, 64.

Describes E2 as "a witty, bone-dry seriocomedy that fascinates and disturbs by turns."

J115 Simon, John. On Screen ("More Moans for the Festival"). *New Leader*, 27 Oct. 1969, 20–3.

Describes E2 as a "film fully bad enough to have made it to the [New York Film] Festival on its own merit."

J115a "Unmagnificent Seventh." In *Movies into Film: Film Criticism 1967–1970*, 382–98. New York: Dial Press, 1971.

- J115b* "Unmagnificent Seventh." In *Movies into Film: Film Criticism 1967–1970*, 382–98. New York: Delta, Dell, 1972.
- J116* Haskell, Molly. *Village Voice*, 30 Oct. 1969, 62.  
Calls [E2](#) "an admirably modest picture," Bressonian in its "dispassionate" analysis of "the mechanism of power."
- J117* H.H. [Hart, Henry.] "Duet for Cannibals." *Films in Review*, Nov. 1969, 572–3.
- J118* Kael, Pauline. "Private Worlds." *New Yorker*, 1 Nov. 1969, 138–42.  
Describes [E2](#) as "one more sealed-off-sex-games-and-guess-what's-real movie."
- J118a* "Private Worlds." In *Deeper into Movies*, 31–6. Boston: Atlantic Monthly Press, Little, Brown & Co.; Toronto: Little Brown & Co. (Canada), 1973.
- J118b* "Private Worlds." In *Deeper into Movies*, 39–46. New York: Bantam, 1974.
- J118c* "Duet for Cannibals." In *5001 Nights at the Movies: A Guide from A to Z*, 159. New York: Holt, Rinehart & Winston, 1982.  
Reprints a *New Yorker* film note derived from [J118](#).
- J119* Hatch, Robert. "Films." *Nation*, 10 Nov. 1969, 515, 517.
- J120* Kauffmann, Stanley. Stanley Kauffmann on Films. *New Republic*, 15 Nov. 1969, 21, 32.  
"After we have added up the totals of aesthetic apparatus, there is still no effective center" in *Duet for Cannibals*.
- J120a* "Duet for Cannibals." In *Figures of Light: Film Criticism and Comment*, 208–9. New York: Harper & Row, 1971.
- J120b* "Duet for Cannibals." In *Figures of Light: Film Criticism and Comment*, 208–9. New York: Harper Colophon Books, 1971.
- J121* Gillet, John. "Man-eating Swedes." *Observer* (London), 30 Nov. 1969, 32.  
\*\*\* Rhode, Eric. "Reliving the Diaspora." *Listener*, 4 Dec. 1969, 805, 807.  
See [J97](#).
- J122* Tucker, Martin. "Please Don't Eat the Cannibals." *Commonweal* 5 Dec. 1969, 306–7.  
Takes the [E2](#) title literally, as if the basic passion of the characters were not eros or politics but "the addiction to food."  
\**J123* *Film Daily*, 21 Dec. 1969.  
Cited in [K69](#).
- J124* Hodgson, Pat. "Duet for Cannibals." *Film* (London) No. 57 (Winter 1970):30.

J125 Dawson, Jan. "Duet för Kannibaler (Duet for Cannibals)." *Monthly Film Bulletin*, Jan. 1970, 4.

Compares Sontag to Iris Murdoch; both depict characters questing for identities, but Sontag's characters never have identities to deviate from or discover. Takes E2 as a "black joke" at the expense of intellectual solemnity.

\*\*\* "To the End of Thought." *TLS*, 8 Jan. 1970, 26.

See J102.

J126 Armes, Roy. "Three Women Directors." *London Magazine*, Feb. 1970, 104–8.

Takes films by Varda, Duras, and Sontag as evincing "the new importance of women in contemporary cinema." Describes E2 as more Pasolini than Bresson in its "non-naturalistic" treatment of "an abstract set of relationships."

J126a "Film Narrative in the 1960s." In *The Ambiguous Image: Narrative Style in Modern European Cinema*, 108–18. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1976.

The "feminist" aspect of J126 is revised out in favor of those modernist-literary elements linking Sontag to a "new" post-Bergman generation of filmmakers.

J126b "Film Narrative in the 1960s." In *The Ambiguous Image: Narrative Style in Modern European Cinema*, 108–18. London: Seeker & Warburg, 1976.

Identical to J126a.

J127 Gow, Gordon. "Duet for Cannibals." *Films and Filming*, Feb. 1970, 51.

Describes the "rescue act" conclusion of E2 as having "a wacky resemblance to myths and fairytales."

J128 Deutelbaum, Marshall. *Library Journal*, 1 Sept. 1970, 2823.

Declines to recommend A6.

J129 Samuels, Charles Thomas. "Movie Theater without Walls." *New York Times Book Review*, 13 Feb. 1972, 2, 20.

J130 Doniol-Valcroze, Jacques. "Couple cherche couple pour le manger." *L'Express*, 16–22 Oct. 1972, 52.

Profiles Sontag (including her plan to film "Broadcast from Pollution Zone 34") as prologue to reviewing the Paris premier of *Duo pour cannibales*. Adduces Sontag's description of E2 as an interrogation of "the couple." Though E2 is "mysterious, strange, and elusive," Sontag directs with "tender humor" and a "firm hand."

### BROTHER CARL (E5 AND A10)

J131 Bergström, Lasse. "Susan Sontag räcker lång näsa åt biopubliken." *Expressen* (Stockholm), 4 May 1971.

Describes E5 as “anemic and scornful of the audience.”

J132 Edström, Mauritz. “Sontags nya film: Obegripligheter utan ledtråd.” *Dagens Nyheter* (Stockholm), 4 May 1971.

Describes E5 as “Incomprehensible.”

\*J133 Nordberg, Carl-Eric. *Vi* (Stockholm), 4 May 1971.

Cited in K197.

J134 Schildt, Jurgen. “En lektion i förkonstling.” *AB* (Stockholm), 4 May 1971.

Describes E5 as an impossible-to-grasp “lesson in artificiality.”

J135 Schiller, Hans. “*Brother Carl*: Absurd slående.” *Svenska Dagbladet* (Stockholm), 4 May 1971.

Compares Sontag to René Margritte; each juxtaposes disparate entities or objects for the sake of new understandings. In E5 Sontag uses people who cannot communicate with each other to confront us with some truth about people.

\*J136 Wredlund, Bertil. *Filmrutan* (Sundsvall), 4 May 1971.

Cited in K197.

J137 Mosk[owitz, G.]. “Non-Competers at Cannes.” *Variety*, 19 May 1971, 17, 26.

E5 shows Sontag “gaining in filmic knowhow, if still not... finding a way of making her ideas and dialog more visual and less literary.”

J137a “Broder Carl.” In *Variety Film Reviews 1971–1974*, 19 May 1971. New York: Garland Publishing, 1983.

\*J138 Slettengren, Suzanne. *Göteborgs Posten*, 25 May 1971.

Cited in K197.

\*J139 Lagerlöf, Karl Erik. *Göteborgs Handels-och Sjöfarts Tidningar*, 26 May 1971.

Cited in K197.

J140 Rosenbaum, Jonathan. “Moviegoing at Cannes: Classics without Labels.” *Village Voice*, 17 June 1971, 72.

Though Sontag “thinks too much,” to judge by the excesses of E5, her “ambition” is such, by contrast with E2, that “one can still find enormous interest in what she is thinking.”

J141 Greenspun, Roger. “Screen: ‘Brother Carl.’” *New York Times*, 12 Aug. 1972, 18.

Describes E5 as “a real movie,” by contrast with E2, in that its neo-Hollywood sentimentality “indicates the taking of considerable imaginative and emotional risks.”

J141a Review of *Brother Carl*. In *The New York Times Film Reviews 1971–1972*, 296. New York: The New York Times & Arno Press, 1973.

J142 Beuman, Sally. "Truly Gritty." *New York*, 28 Aug. 1972, 46–7.

J143 Mauriac, Claude. "Les blessures de l'amour." *L'Express*, 29 Jan.–4 Feb. 1973, 66–7.

Takes the French title of E5 (*Les Gémeaux*—"the twins") as the key to its real subject, which is love; links E5 to Sontag's remarks on sexuality in *Les temps modernes* (B43a).

J144 Hirsch, Foster. "Susan Sontag: Is 'Creative,' But Awkward." *Variety*, 4 Dec. 1974, 6.

BRIEF REVIEWS: *Film Society Review* 7.4 (Dec. 1971):23–30 (see pp. 23–4); *Cinéma* (Paris), 13 Mar. 1973, 151; *Publishers Weekly*, 10 June 1974, 38; *Choice*, Mar.–June 1975, 85.

### PROMISED LANDS (E7)

J145 Kauffmann, Stanley. Stanley Kauffmann on Films. *New Republic*, 29 June 1974, 18, 33–4.

Criticizes E7 for its documentary "triteness" while praising Sontag's Hegelian interest in the partiality of truth.

J146 Wilson, Robert. A., Jr. "Promised Lands." *Audience* (New York) No. 73 (July 1974):5–6.

Describes E7 as "a political documentary *with* a difference...and *with* a sting."

J147 Kissel, Howard. "Promised Lands." *Women's Wear Daily*, 8 July 1974, 24.

Praises Sontag for "letting the images speak for themselves," while acknowledging how they (ambiguously, paradoxically) express a critical vantage point.

J148 Hitch[ens, G.]. "Promised Lands." *Variety*, 10 July 1974, 16.

J148a "Promised Lands." In *Variety Film Reviews 1971–1974*, 10 July 1974. New York: Garland Publishing, 1983.

J149 Sayre, Nora. "Screen: Sontag's 'Promised Lands.'" *New York Times*, 12 July 1974, 44.

Describes E7 as a "haphazard" "tone poem" that fails to document Israel's "factually complex" circumstances.

J149a "Treatment of Israel Is at Screening Room." In *The New York Times Film Reviews 1973–1974*, 234. New York: The New York Times & Arno Press, 1975.

\*J150 Winsten, Archer. "Promised Lands Opens at the Screening Room." *New York Post*, 12 July 1974.

Cited in 17.

J151 Gilliatt, Penelope. "Promises." *New Yorker*, 15 July 1974, 58, 60–1.

Describes E7 as “a film rendered tranquil by sanity,” though its subject is a cultural nervous breakdown.

J152 Sarris, Andrew. “From Holocaust to Hegira.” *Village Voice*, 18 July 1974, 61–2.

Claims that “each image” of E7 is so various of implication “that it is possible for people to see and hear in the film whatever their prior prejudices want them to see and hear.”

J152a “Promised Lands.” In *Politics and Cinema*, 96–101. New York: Columbia Univ. Press, 1978.

J153 Moran, David. “Promised Lands.” *Boston Phoenix*, 6 Aug. 1974, sec. 2, 2, 8.

Describes E7 as “stupefyingly tedious.”

J154 Byron, Stuart. ““Jews Understand Drama, Not Tragedy.”” *Real Paper* (Cambridge, MA), 7 Aug. 1974.

Praises the tentative, simple, “rushed” quality of E7; notes the (pointed) contrast between the abstractions of Sontag’s on-screen speakers and the (grim) materiality of Sontag’s images.

J155 Grossman, Edward. “Susan Sontag’s Israel.” *Commentary*, Oct. 1974, 78–9.

Disputes descriptions of Israel or E7 as “tragic.” Attributes the film’s sympathetic treatment of Israel to Sontag’s status as a “frustrated patriot.”

J156 Simon, John. Films. *Esquire*, Oct. 1974, 14, 16, 20, 24.

Defends E7 against charges that Sontag’s “personal vision” had overcome documentary truth. Describes the film’s mode as “tragic irony,” as if Sontag were trying, via an “antiphonal” play of voices, “to give us a Beckettian documentary.”

J157 Eichelbaum, Stanley. “Superb Study of ‘Promised Lands.’” *San Francisco Examiner*, 7 Oct. 1974, 25.

J158 Weiner, Bernard. “Ms. Sontag Fulfills Her Promise.” *San Francisco Chronicle*, 8 Oct. 1974.

J159 Kitchens, Gordon. “Promised Lands.” *Film Library Quarterly* 8.2 (1975): 36–7.

J160 McCourt, James. “Promised Lands.” *Film Comment* 11.4 (July–Aug. 1975):36.

Describes Sontag’s E7 purpose as “provocation,” akin to that of the liberal novelist who helps “narrate” the film.

J161 Sweet, Louise. “*Promised Lands* and *A Sense of Loss*.” *Sight and Sound* 45 (Spring 1976):123–4.

J162 Craven, Jenny. “Promised Lands.” *Films and Filming*, Apr. 1976, 37.

BRIEF REVIEWS: *New York*, 15 July 1974, 62–3; *Penthouse*, Sept. 1974, 36; *Monthly Film Bulletin*, May 1976, 104–5.

**ANTONIN ARTAUD: SELECTED WRITINGS (A11)**

J163 Simon, John. "Such Scrupulous Violence." *Saturday Review*, 2 Oct. 1976, 29–31.

Praises A11, especially its introductory essay, while criticizing the bibliography for partisanship in its exclusions.

J164 Weightman, John. "Life Itself Was Theater of Cruelty." *New York Times Book Review*, 7 Nov. 1976, 35–6.

Disputes Sontag's "post-Romantic" grasp of modernism; puzzles her eclecticism in admiring Artaud while advocating an "art as play" perspective Artaud would have rejected.

J165 Shattuck, Roger. "Artaud Possessed." *New York Review of Books*, 11 Nov. 1976, 17–23.

Disputes Sontag's D22 explanation of Artaud's "failure" as a writer, while describing the "totalitarian" strain of his thinking as bad cultural medicine.

J165a Excerpts. In *Twentieth-Century Literary Criticism*, Volume 3, edited by Sharon K. Hall, 59. Detroit: Gale Research, 1980.

J165b "Artaud Possessed." In *The Innocent Eye: On Modern Literature and the Arts*, 169–86. New York: Farrar Straus Giroux; Toronto: Collins Publishers, 1984.

J165c "Artaud Possessed." In *The Innocent Eye: On Modern Literature and the Arts*, 206–27. New York: Washington Square Press, 1986.

J166 Fludas, John. *New Republic*, 25 Dec. 1976, 28–30.

J167 Sellin, Eric. *Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* 36 (Fall 1977):113–4.

J168 Hayman, Ronald. "The Art of Being Someone Else: Psychology and Literature." *Encounter*, July 1977, 77–81.

J169 Cox, Nancy. "Theater of Blood." *Christian Century*, 12 Oct. 1977, 921.

Discusses Sontag's introduction at some length, while advising that (like Artaud) "it be taken in bits."

BRIEF REVIEWS: *Library Journal*, 1 Oct. 1976, 2064; *Virginia Quarterly Review* 53.2 (Spring 1977):68; *Antioch Review* 35 (Spring-Summer 1977):317; *Choice*, Mar. 1977, 47–8.

**ON PHOTOGRAPHY (A12)**

J170 Lehmann-Haupt, Christopher. Books of The Times ("Against Photography"). *New York Times*, 14 Nov. 1977, 31.

Reads A12 as a critique of "industrial society."

J171 Lifson, Ben. "Sontag's 'On Photography': An Eloquent Distortion." *Village Voice*, 28 Nov. 1977, 44–5.

Takes [A12](#) as expressing “uneasiness about illusion itself; argues that Sontag misses photography’s pleasures, its openly artificial utopianism, its (oft-censored) capacities for ethical narration. Urges that Sontag’s leveling of photography mimes her view of photography as atomizing reality.

J172 Davis, Douglas. “Kicking the Image Habit.” *Newsweek*, 5 Dec. 1977, 98, 100.

Takes [A12](#) as an enraged repudiation of aestheticism.

J173 Grossman, Edward. “False Images.” *Saturday Review*, 10 Dec. 1977, 46–8.

Describes [A12](#) as “a profoundly reactionary meditation” in its “bookish” preference for words over images.

J174 Shay, Arthur. “A Love-Hate Affair with the Camera.” *Book World (Chicago Tribune)*, 11 Dec. 1977, 2.

J175 Gass, William. “A Different Kind of Art.” *New York Times Book Review*, 18 Dec. 1977, 7, 30, 33.

Describes [A12](#) as “brief but brilliant,” a “meditation, not a treatise,” his own review as a “dissolute echo” of Sontag’s convictions about the differences photography makes.

*J175a* Excerpts. In *Contemporary Literary Criticism*, Vol. 10, edited by Dedria Bryfonski, 484–5. Detroit: Gale Research, 1979.

J176 Hughes, Robert. “A Tourist in Other People’s Reality.” *Time*, 26 Dec. 1977, 66–7.

Disputes Sontag’s claims about photography’s incapacity to narrate, or to express social concern, while concluding that “not many photographs are worth a thousand of her words.”

*J176a* “Susan Sontag új könyvéről: A fényképezőgép kétértelmű lenséje.” *Fotóművészet* (Budapest) 22.2 (1979):36–7.  
A Hungarian translation of [J176](#).

J177 Clark, James W., Jr. “On Photography.” In *Magill’s Literary Annual 1978*, Vol. 2, edited by Frank N. Magill, 618–21. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Salem Press, 1978.

Avows that Sontag “is downhearted about the shutter business. And she will not stop saying so.”

J178 Leonard, Candice J. “The Soft Addiction.” *Et Cetera* (San Francisco) 35 (Winter 1978):442–5.

Denies that reality exists apart from mediation such that a particular mediation is a priori distorting or can signify apart from (social) context.

J179 Stange, Maren. “Susan Sontag: Recycling the Self.” *New Boston Review* 2.4 (Spring 1978):12.

Juxtaposes A12 and A13; where the latter eschews disease metaphors, the former employs them (addiction, pollution). Reads A12 as “hard to follow” for lacking connection to history and aesthetics; takes Sontag’s view of photography as self-expressively or -servingly instrumental, thus self-contradictory given her critique of photo-instrumentalism.

J179a                   Untitled excerpts. In *Contemporary Literary Criticism*, Vol. 10, edited by Dedria Bryfonski, 486–7. Detroit: Gale Research, 1979.

J180 Arnheim, Rudolf. *Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* 36 (Summer 1978):514–5.

Praises the “rhapsodic” rhetoric of A12, by contrast with Kracauer’s succinct appraisal of photography’s “double nature,” a fact Sontag adduces “as one symptom among dozens of others,” as if her attentiveness to “the short-term fluctuations of taste” had blinded her to “the tidal waves of history.”

J181 Wurtzel, Gary I. *Journal of Broadcasting* 22.3 (Summer 1978): 390–2.

Takes A12 as confirming McLuhan’s “medium is the message” claim in ways applicable to film and television.

J182 Guimond, James. “Photography as Myth/Photography as History.” *Georgia Review* 32 (Fall 1978):658–61.

Takes A12 as an expression of Sontag’s (romantic) “personal mythology,” which equates predation, sexuality, and death.

J183 Houston, Penelope. *Sight and Sound* 47 (Autumn 1978):265.

Considers the implications of A12a for film criticism, with special reference to its discussion of Antonioni’s *Chung Kuo*.

J184 Copeland, Roger. “Books Considered.” *New Republic*, 21 Jan. 1978, 28–30.

Critiques Sontag’s contradictory claims that photography “transforms” the world and that the world (as subject matter) remains “recalcitrant.” Urges photography’s capacity not to transform but to “redeem” the world as a more helpful explanation of the allegiance it commands.

J185 Leder, Dennis. “Instant Icons, Associated Americans.” *America*, 28 Jan. 1978, 64–5.

J186 Kazin, Alfred. “Sontag Is Not a Camera.” *Esquire*, Feb. 1978, 50–1.

Argues that “Sontag would rather talk about the nature of ‘images’ than see pictures in the life around her,” hence her scant attention to the “social” context she accuses photography of distorting when, in fact, it is language that has the greatest capacity for inventing (replacing) the world.

\*\*\* Nocera, Gigliola. “On Photography.” *Scena* (Milan), Feb. 1978, 48–50.

See F32.

J187 Thornton, Gene. “Susan Sontag’s Unwelcome Truth.” *Art News*, Feb. 1978, 130–1.

J188 Kuczowski, Richard. "Legacies of the Lens." *Commonweal*, 3 Feb. 1978, 87–9.

Describes [A12](#) as "intellectual pinball on the French model."

*J188a* Excerpts. In *Contemporary Literary Criticism*, Vol. 10, edited by Dedria Bryfonski, 485. Detroit: Gale Research, 1979.

*J188b* Excerpts. In *Modern American Literature*, 4th. ed., Vol. 5, A Library of Literary Criticism, edited by Paul Schlueter and June Schlueter, 448–50. New York: Frederick Ungar Publishing, 1985.

J189 McPherson, William. "Snap Judgments, Depth of Field." *Book World (Washington Post)*, 5 Feb. 1978, [G1](#), [G5](#).

J190 Simon, John. "Looking into the Camera." *New Leader*, 13 Feb. 1978, 17–8.

Praises [A12](#) for offering "unanswered questions in the place of false security and dangerous misconceptions" even if her "helicopter style" makes it "hard to tell" where Sontag stands.

J191 Long, Barbara. "Against Photography: Sontag Exposes the Politics of Images." *Politicks and Other Human Interests* No. 10 (14 Mar. 1978):25–6.

Praises Sontag's "relaxed" prose while wishing for "more heart and less head." Implicitly compares Sontag's lack of "vivid indignation" to that lack of human compassion in the photographs of Diane Arbus of which [A12](#) is critical.

J192 Elliott, George P. "High Prophetess of High Fashion." *TLS*, 17 Mar. 1978, 304.

Takes Sontag's preference for Avedon over Weston as a matter of sexual "fashion" à la [B11](#). Disputes her treatment of Dorothea Lange as prologue to a critique of her "America is bad" while "Marxists are good" doctrine. See [K79–81](#).

*J192a* Excerpts. In *Contemporary Literary Criticism*, Vol. 10, edited by Dedria Bryfonski, 485–6. Detroit: Gale Research, 1979.

J193 Boorsch, Suzanne. *Print Collector's Newsletter*, Mar.–Apr. 1978, 23–5.

Argues that Sontag's "melodramatic" rhetoric commits category mistakes that lead to historical and logical errors.

J194 Jussim, Estelle. "On Photomorality." *History of Photography* (London), Apr. 1978, 182–4.

Takes Sontag's errors of fact and repetition of ideas as instancing the deadening proliferation of which photography stands accused in [A12](#).

J195 Molesworth, Charles. "Photography as Art." *Bennington Review* No. 1 (Apr. 1978):97–9.

J196 Starenko, Michael. "On 'On Photography.'" *New Art Examiner*, Apr. 1978, 12, 23.

Sees negative criticism of A12 as taking "photography" for "content," at the expense of Sontag's meditative, dialectical "form," precisely the objectifying reduction Sontag's phenomenology inveighs against. Takes "thinking" as A12's primary topic, the experience of contradiction as its chief contribution, "Susan Sontag" as its primary image.

J197 O'Brien, Thelma. "On Photography: Sontag: Through a Lens Darkly." *Los Angeles Times*, 23 Apr. 1978, sec. 5, 21.

J198 Roy, Joaquín. "Una vivisección sin piedad de la fotografía." *Camp de l'arpa* (Barcelona) No. 51 (May 1978):52–3.

Describes A12 as "cold water" thrown on those who expect a commonplace examination of photography as art.

J199 Naughton, John. "Accidental Art." *Listener*, 27 July 1978, 127.

J200 Feaver, William. "Cult of the Camera." *Observer* (London), 30 July 1978, 26.

J201 Zwingle, Erla. "Forgive Us Our Trespasser." *American Photographer*, Aug. 1978, 84–5.

Reviews the reviews of A12; photography wins.

J202 Becker, Peter von. "Wie verhaelt sich das Bild zur Welt?" *Film und TV Kameramann* (Munich) 27 (Sept. 1978):356, 358, 360, 362.

Summarizes A12d at some length; notes Sontag's kinship to Brecht, to Kracauer, to Benjamin, though she differs from the latter two in believing that photography's "aestheticizing" of reality is irremediable. Faults her reliance on Marcuse at the expense of social-psychological research, while allowing that an aesthetic of fragments seems historically apt.

J203 Collis, Louise. *Books and Bookmen*, Sept. 1978, 65.

Takes A12a as "anti-literature"—if photography is "the ideal arm of consciousness in its acquisitive mood."

J204 McEwan, Ian. "Kamera Obskura." *New Statesman*, 29 Sept. 1978, 410–1.

J205 Vaczek, Louis. *Technology and Culture* 19 (Oct. 1978):760–2.

Scores A12's absolutist view of photographic technology by reference to Sontag's own description of the way photographs are used differently in China than in the capitalist West.

J206 Melville, Robert. "Images of the Instant Past: Sontag on Photography." *Encounter*, Nov. 1978, 69–73.

Takes the effect of A12a, despite its polemical tone, to be an "ironic neutrality" akin to that evoked in the concluding anthology of quotations.

J206a Excerpts. In *Contemporary Literary Criticism*, Vol. 13, edited by Dedria Bryfonski, 515–6. Detroit: Gale Research, 1980.

J207 Moyano, Beatriz. "Much Outcry: Little Outcome." *Artes visuales* (Mexico, D.F.) No. 19 (Sept.–Nov. 1978):xv–xvi.

Praises "Photographic Evangels" for acknowledging complexities not sufficiently accounted for elsewhere in [A12](#).

J208 Stone, Laurie. "On Sontag." *Viva*, Nov. 1978, 39–40.

Finds Sontag's "nay-saying logic" in [A12](#) and [A13](#) both inspiring and off-putting. Faults [A12](#) for mean-spiritedness and questionable figures of speech: "If comparing cancer to an imperialist army distorts our concept of cancer, doesn't comparing a camera to a gun distort the reality of a camera?"

J209 Kirkpatrick, Diane. "Photographs and Film." *Michigan Quarterly Review* 18 (Winter 1979):136–44.

J210 Green, Harvey. *Winterthur Portfolio* 14.2 (Summer 1979): 209–11.

Takes Sontag's linkages of photography and social psychology as more "offered" than "explained." Sees photography as no more fragmentary than "any document."

J211 Lewis, Paul. "On Sontag." *Ten.8* (Birmingham) No. 2 (Summer 1979):3.

Takes Sontag's "quotation style" as embodying the very surrealism of which photography stands accused. Though Sontag equates photography with "the Fall," which the heroine narrator takes "upon herself," [A12\[a\]](#) is best understood as "autobiography" of "a confusing and contradictory" sort.

J212 Halber, Jacques. *Leonardo* 12 (Autumn 1979):344.

J213 Montador, Gordon. "Gay Chic: Bad Exposure." *Body Politic* (Toronto), Dec. 1978–Jan. 1979, 38–9.

Critiques *The Gay Picturebook* via [A12b](#), by noting how photography can distort truth even while claiming it.

J213a "Bad Exposure: A Review of *The Gay Picturebook*." In *Flaunting It!: A Decade of Gay Journalism from The Body Politic*, edited by Ed Jackson and Stan Persky, 122–5. Vancouver: New Star Books; Toronto: Pink Triangle Press, 1982.

J214 Bondi, Inge. "Fotografie als Ritus." *Schweizer Monatshefte* (Zurich) 59 (Mar. 1979):249–53.

Attributes the success of [A12d](#) to the clever use of such words as "seduction," "rape," and "cannibalism" out of their ordinary contexts so as to take the pulse of modern society.

J215 Potts, James. *Educational Broadcasting International*, June 1979, 79–80.

J216 Cournot, Michel. "Un peu trop de flou artistique." *Le Nouvel Observateur* (Paris), 25 June 1979, 72–3.

Asserts that photographs, contra [A12f](#), can depict the disgusting or the morally objectionable without distortion. Faults Sontag's understanding of (Breton's) "surrealism" and her elitist attitude toward amateur photographers.

J217 Small, Edward S. *Journal of the University Film Association* 32.3 (1980): 35–6.

Takes [A12b](#) as “more concerned with classic ontologic and epistemologic issues...than with matters of aesthetic value”; praises its “associative structure” for leading the reader “to a place of bewildered, worried wonder” about photography’s social status and consequences.

J218 Bashford, Bruce. *National Forum* 60.2 (Spring 1980):45–6.

Compares the muteness of lyric poetry to that of photography, the descriptive capacity of photographs to that of thought generally, so as to qualify Sontag’s critique.

J219 Priestman, Judith. *British Journal of Aesthetics* 20 (Summer 1980):284–6.

J220 Vestal, David. “As I See It.” *Popular Photography*, Nov. 1982, 58, 120.

J221 Denegri, Ješa. “Trije teksti o fotografiji.” Trans. (Slovene) S.Dragan. *Ekran* (Ljubljana) 8.1–2 (1983):44–5.

Compares Sontag to Gisele Freund, to Umberto Eco. Praises [A12q](#) for the theoretical deliberateness of its hypercritical analyses of the medium of photography.

BRIEF REVIEWS: *Kirkus Reviews*, 1 Sept. 1977, 979–80; *Publishers Weekly*, 3 Oct. 1977, 92; *Booklist*, 1 Nov. 1977, 450; *Library Journal*, 1 Nov. 1977, 2250; *Village Voice*, 26 Dec. 1977, 75–6 (see p. 76); *Antioch Review* 36 (Spring 1978):248; *Virginia Quarterly Review* 54 (Spring 1978):69; *Journalism Quarterly* 55 (Autumn 1978):632–3; *New York Times Book Review*, 1 Jan. 1978, 3; *AB Bookman’s Weekly*, 23 Jan. 1978, 488; *American Libraries*, Feb. 1978, 96–7 (see p. 96); *Camera* No. 2 (Feb. 1978):48; *Modern Photography*, Mar. 1978, 164; *Media and Methods*, Apr. 1978, 6; *Petersen’s Photographic Magazine*, June 1978, 103–4; *Publishers Weekly*, 7 Aug. 1978, 81; *Choice*, Sept. 1978, 854; *Il diaframma* (Milan), Dec. 1978, 14; *CoEvolution Quarterly* 20 (Winter 1978/79): 68; *Media and Methods*, Apr. 1979, 45; *Museum News*, Mar.–Apr. 1979, 69–70; *British Journal of Photography*, 19 Oct. 1979, 1007; *Journal of American Culture* 2 (Winter 1980):756; *British Book News*, Oct. 1982, 594–9 (see p. 596); *Book Review* (*Los Angeles Times*), 26 Aug. 1990, 10.

## ILLNESS AS METAPHOR ([A13](#) AND [A22](#))

### AIDS AND ITS METAPHORS ([A20B](#) AND [A22](#))

J222 Leonard, John. Books of The Times. *New York Times*, 1 June 1978, C19.

Describes [A13](#) as indicating a writer on the verge of a “creative binge.” It is a very good book free of “mannerism and glibness.” Sontag is “a critic of metaphors.”

J223 Logan, William. “Exploring the Fantasies and Ritual Fears of Disease.” *Book World* (*Chicago Tribune*), 11 June 1978, 1.

Criticizes [A13](#) as too literary, not historical enough.

J224 demons, Walter. "Mythology of Illness." *Newsweek*, 12 June 1978, 96–96D.

Praises Sontag for "an exhilarating literary performance," [A13](#) as surpassing "anything Sontag has done before."

J225 Storr, Anthony. "The Rhetoric and Romance of Pain." *Book World (Washington Post)*, 25 June 1978, 1, 4.

J226 Scarf, Maggie. "A Message from the Kingdom of the Sick." *Psychology Today*, July 1978, 111–2, 114, 116.

Takes Sontag's analysis of cancer-as-metaphor as a literary overgeneralization; sees ambivalence toward cancer sufferers as directed less toward cancer than toward mortality per se.

*J226a* Excerpts. In *Contemporary Literary Criticism*, Vol. 10, edited by Dedria Bryfonski, 487. Detroit: Gale Research, 1979.

J227 Wolff, Geoffrey. "Defusing the Rhetoric of a Dread Disease." *New Times*, 10 July 1978, 74–5.

Calls [A13](#) "tone-perfect, a gorgeous, tough clear piece of writing."

J228 Kenney, Edwin J., Jr. *New Republic*, 8–15 July 1978, 37–9.

Adduces Sontag's generally "combative" approach to ideas. Praises her [A13](#) analysis of the application of disease metaphors to social crises as revealing of social pathology.

J229 Donoghue, Denis. "Disease Should Be Itself." *New York Times Book Review*, 16 July 1978, 9, 27.

Describes [A13](#) as short on evidence and long on angry rhetorical skill, punitive in its attack on punitiveness, though "extraordinarily perceptive" about social attitudes as well.

J230 Dennis, Nigel. "Infirmity Blues." *New York Review of Books*, 20 July 1978, 18, 20.

Praises [A13](#), while holding that Sontag allows her own metaphors to go too far, especially when they derive from the "standard terms of radical expression."

J231 O'Toole, Lawrence. "A Sound Mind in an 'Unsound' Body." *Maclean's* (Toronto), 24 July 1978, 55.

Observes the "emotional" quality of [A13](#)'s "spare style."

J232 Romano, John, and Nancy Forbes Romano. "Illness Purified." *New York Arts Journal* Sept.–Oct. 1978, 16.

Compares Sontag to Barthes, though Sontag is more openly a "social reformer."

J233 Leder, Dennis. *America*, 7 Oct. 1978, 230–1.

\*\*\* Stone, Laurie. "On Sontag." *Viva*, Nov. 1978, 39–40.

See [J208](#).

J234 Mittleman, Leslie B. "Illness as Metaphor." In *Magill's Literary Annual 1979*, Vol. 1, edited by Frank N. Magill, 295–9. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Salem Press, 1979.

Takes the TB/cancer analogy that structures A13's argument against metaphor as itself an overly literary metaphor.

J235 Selz, Dorothy. *National Forum* 69.1 (Winter 1979):48.

J236 Mandell, Alan. "Illness as Metaphor." *Minnesota Review*, n.s., No. 12 (Spring 1979):104–6.

Takes A13 as exemplifying (like B28) an "archaeology" of language and concepts à la Foucault, though one grounded in a scientific universalism that ignores the ideology of medicine.

J237 Darnell, Matthew C. "Grace of Spirit." *Sewanee Review* 87 (Summer 1979):lxvi–lxvii.

J238 Alvarez, A. "Diseased Imaginations." *Observer* (London), 18 Feb. 1979, 37.

Takes A13c as "curiously brutal" in its arguments.

J239 Clare, Anthony. "The Guilty Sick." *Listener*, 22 Feb. 1979, 294–5.

Questions the view that, once a cause and treatment are discovered, then all other factors of an illness are irrelevant.

J239a Excerpts. In *Contemporary Literary Criticism*, Vol. 13, edited by Dedria Bryfonski, 518–9. Detroit: Gale Research, 1980.

J240 Davies, Russell. "Public Enemy Number One." *New Statesman*, 23 Feb. 1979, 256.

Suggests Sontag herself would seek "comforting" metaphors if ill enough. Wishes her continued good health.

J241 Whipp, Elisabeth. "Night Side." *Spectator*, 17 Mar. 1979, 20–1.

J242 Mathers, James. *Journal of Medical Ethics* 7 (1981):45–6.

Considers A13c "ethically unhelpful" in its insistent confusions—of *experiencing* illness and *being* ill, of aetiology and therapy.

J243 Bindseil, Use. "Krankheit und Metapher: Zu Susan Sontags Gesellschaftskritik." *Das Argument* (Berlin) No. 125 (Jan.–Feb. 1981):70–2.

Takes Sontag as desiring an ideology-free, metaphor-less approach to the reality of illness; takes "reality" itself as a social metaphor that Sontag does not sufficiently interrogate.

J244 Feinstein, A. David. *Death Education* 7 (1983):396–8.

Cites research confirming the psychological causes of cancer while praising A13 for overemphasizing, in a helpfully cautionary way, the need to avoid "punitive cultural biases."

J245 Carpenter, David A. "Illness as Metaphor." In *Masterplots II: Non Fiction Series*, Vol. 2, edited by Frank N. Magill, 689–93. Pasadena, CA: Salem Press, 1989.

Notes how [A13](#) denies psychological theories of causality while seeking to change the way people think about disease.

J246 Guest, Charles. "Aids and Its Metaphors." *Social Science and Medicine* 29 (1989):1305–6.

[A20b](#) "examines AIDS more for its likenesses than its reality."

J247 Stone, Deborah A. *Journal of Health Politics, Policy and Law* 14 (1989): 850–2.

Discusses per [A20b](#) the "ever present" ambiguity of disease metaphors; notes that Sontag "missed the metaphor of discrimination" while praising [A20b](#) as "brilliant."

J248 Roudiez, Leon S. Review of *AIDS and Its Metaphors*. *World Literature Today* 63 (Autumn 1989):685.

J249 Jaffrey, Zia. "A Literary Performance." *Elle*, Jan. 1989, 74–6.

Ponders the wisdom of Sontag's [A20b](#) urging that the "war" metaphor be retired, while praising her Woolfian style for an "equanimity" that "demystifies the disease."

J250 Prose, Francine. "Words That Wound." *Savvy Woman*, Jan. 1989, 100–1.

[A20b](#) is "so informed by compassion, that at moments one senses in its tone an intensity bordering almost on wildness."

J251 Drabelle, Dennis. "AIDS as Moral Evil: The Symbolism of a Disease." *Book World (Washington Post)*, 15 Jan. 1989, 9.

J252 Lehmann-Haupt, Christopher. Books of The Times ("Shaping the Reality of AIDS through Language"). *New York Times*, 16 Jan. 1989, C18.

Praises Sontag for her practical compassion for the ill, while questioning her reticence on the topic of AIDS prevention.

J253 Klinghoffer, David. Bookshelf ("AIDS as 'Just Another Word'"). *Wall Street Journal*, 20 Jan. 1989, [A20 \(E\)](#).

J254 Perrow, Charles. "Healing Words." *Tribune Books (Chicago Tribune)*, 22 Jan. 1989, 6.

"Sontag's [[A20b](#)] emphasis on metaphors means that she says too little of the realities of education, social conditions and politics."

J255 Robinson, Paul. "Against Fatalism." *New York Times Book Review*, 22 Jan. 1989, 11.

Urges, contra [A20b](#), that "the metaphors associated with AIDS have tended to be both tame and apposite."

J256 Shilts, Randy. "Insights into an Epidemic of Fear." *Review (Sunday San Francisco Examiner and Chronicle)*, 29 Jan. 1989, 1, 11.

Praises Sontag's efforts to trace the "cultural integration" of AIDS via metaphor, while faulting her brevity and her failure to assess "how liberals have 'metaphorized' AIDS."

J257 Gates, David. "Now, Metaphor as Illness." *Newsweek*, 30 Jan. 1989, 79.

J258 Sobran, Joseph. "Hazards of Metaphor." *National Review*, 24 Feb. 1989, 48–50.

"Miss Sontag's discontent with the way people talk knows no bounds."

J259 Kleinman, Arthur. "When You're the One with AIDS, It's a Different Fight." *Book Review (Los Angeles Times)*, 26 Feb. 1989, 8.

Contrasts Sontag's distrust of the military metaphor with its use by Emmanuel Dreuilhe in *Mortal Embrace*. (Notes Sontag's assistance in the American publication of the latter.)

J260 Keates, Jonathan. "Waiting for the End." *Observer* (London), 12 Mar. 1989, 45.

J261 Goldstein, Richard. "Bishop Berkeley's Virus: The Two Cultures of AIDS." *Village Voice*, 14 Mar. 1989, 49–51.

Takes Sontag's interpretation of AIDS as "a clinical construction," as instancing "willful ignorance of both scientific inquiry and political critique."

J262 Reed, Paul. "The Meanings of AIDS." *Advocate* (Los Angeles), 14 Mar. 1989, 61.

J263 Jay, Margaret. "Marching as to War." *Listener*, 16 Mar. 1989, 30–1.

J264 Dyer, Geoff. "The Way We Live Now." *New Statesman and Society*, 17 Mar. 1989, 34–5.

Contrasts Sontag's [A20a](#) language with the prose of John Berger, Raymond Williams, and George Steiner. By the time she is compared to Roland Barthes as a master of "all the most difficult forms of writing: the colon, parenthesis, italics, the semi-colon, ellipses...", the aura of sarcasm is palpable.

J265 Maitland, Sara. "Practising Safe Language." *Spectator*, 25 Mar. 1989, 29.

J266 Watney, Simon. "Sense and Less than Sense about AIDS." *Guardian Weekly* (Manchester), 26 Mar. 1989, 28.

Scores as "ungenerous" Sontag's unwillingness or inability to acknowledge other writers and writings on AIDS.

J267 Grover, Jan Zita. "AIDS Culture." *Women's Review of Books*, Apr. 1989, 5–6.

Attacks Sontag's picture of the metaphoric construction of AIDS—for excluding among its authors those from "the mostaffected communities," and for failing to notice, in saying that AIDS has not been psychologized, exactly that tendency among gay male victims of the disease, for example.

J268 Porter, Roy. "Fighting Talk." *Nature* (London), 20 Apr. 1989, 669–70.

J269 Kolovakos, Gregory. "AIDS Words." *Nation*, 1 May 1989, 598–602.

Takes Sontag's [A20b](#) praise of "monogamy" as "shallow revisionism," which will be taken seriously "only because it comes from Sontag's typewriter."

J270 Nicholson, Michael. "Metaphorically Speaking." *Rites* (Toronto), June 1989, 17.

Observes that Sontag "strangely ignores" the effect of AIDS imagery "on the expression of sexuality itself." Wishes [A20b](#) were "more traditionally linear" in its form, while praising it as "cautionary, vital, and thoughtful."

J271 Kovan, Dick. "The Fatal Power of Language." *New Scientist* (London), 17 June 1989, 10.

J272 Levin, David Michael. "AIDS." *JAMA*, 11 Aug. 1989, 837–8.

Praises [A20b](#); wonders if the abandonment of metaphor might hurt AIDS patients by denying some “existential meaning” that would help them to die with dignity.

J273 Lawson, Sylvia. “Sickness and Salvation.” *London Review of Books*, 31 Aug. 1989, 7–8.

J274 Grover, Jan Zita. “AIDS: Metaphors and Real Life.” *Christianity and Crisis*, 11 Sept. 1989, 268–70.

J275 Chandler, Daniel Ross. Review of *AIDS and Its Metaphors*. *Religious Humanism* 24.3 (1990):144–5.

J276 Rodgers, Bernard. “AIDS and Its Metaphors.” In *Magill’s Literary Annual 1990*, Vol. 1, edited by Frank H. Magill, 19–23. Pasadena, CA: Salem Press, 1990.

Takes [A20b](#), like [A13](#), as seeking to “de-mythicize” disease, though it focuses less on literary than public policy texts.

J277 Caldwell, Mark. “The Literature of AIDS: Sensationalism, Hysteria, and Good Sense.” *Dissent* 37 (Summer 1990):342–7.

J277a “The Literature of AIDS.” In *Culture in An Age of Money: The Legacy of the 1980s in America*, edited by Nicolaus Mills, 201–15. Chicago: Ivan R. Dee, 1990.

J278 Jones, Ann Hudson. “Metaphors, Narratives, and Images of AIDS.” *Medical Humanities Review*, Jan. 1990, 7–16.

J279 Dideriksen, Patricia W., and John A. Harriett. *New England Journal of Medicine*, 8 Feb. 1990, 415.

Describes [A20b](#) as “noble” and informative for those who are naive about AIDS, but those with AIDS will be “disappointed.”

J280 Broyard, Anatole. “Good Books about Being Sick.” *New York Times Book Review*, 1 Apr. 1990:1, 28–9.

Describes [A22](#) as being “to illness what William Empson’s *Seven Types of Ambiguity* is to literature.”

J281 Murphy, Elaine. Review of *Illness as Metaphor*. *English Journal* 80.2 (Feb. 1991):88.

BRIEF REVIEWS: *Bookviews* 1.10 (1978):84; *Virginia Quarterly Review* 54 (Autumn 1978):127; *Kirkus Reviews*, 15 Apr. 1978, 482; *Publishers Weekly*, 1 May 1978, 80; *Library Journal*, 1 June 1978, 1159–60; *Booklist*, 15 June 1978, 1588; *Village Voice*, 19 June 1978, 81; *National Review*, 23 June 1978, 786; *San Diego Magazine*, Aug. 1978, 206; *Best Sellers*, Nov. 1978, 254; *Choice*, Dec. 1978, 1356; *Maclean’s* (Toronto), 8 Jan. 1979, 46; *Punch*, 21 Feb. 1979, 325; *New York Times Book Review*, 10 June 1979, 49; *Journal of the History of Medicine and Allied Sciences* 35 (Jan. 1980):123–4; *Praxis der Psychotherapie und Psychosomatik* 25.3 (May 1980):149; *Books and Bookmen*, Nov. 1983, 36–7; *Book Review (Los Angeles Times)*, 7 Aug. 1988, 10; *Jim Kobak’s Kirkus Reviews*, 1 Nov. 1988, 1591–2; *Publishers Weekly*, 11 Nov. 1988, 46; *Booklist*, 1

Dec. 1988, 602; *Virginia Quarterly Review* 65 (Summer 1989):97–8; *Stendahl Club* (Grenoble), 15 Jan. 1989, 163; *Economist*, 6 May 1989, 85–6; *Times Educational Supplement*, 26 May 1989, B8; \**Flash Art News*, May–June 1989, 10; *Publishers Weekly*, 1 Dec. 1989, 54; *Book Review (Los Angeles Times)*, 4 Feb. 1990, 14; *Times Educational Supplement*, 27 Apr. 1990, A37; *Journal of the Royal Society of Health* 110 (Sept.–Oct. 1990):189.

## I, ETCETERA (A14)

J282 Howard, Maureen. “Sontag’s Surrender.” *Saturday Review*, 28 Oct. 1978, 46–7.

Reads “Doctor Jekyll” as “pre-Freudian myth” become “a delightful post-Freudian romp.” Compares Sontag to Borges and Woody Allen; equates A14 and A3 as examples of “vigorous” and “highly imaginative” writing.

J283 Broyard, Anatole. Books of The Times (“Styles of Radical Sensibility”). *New York Times*, 11 Nov. 1978, 21.

Traces Sontag’s radical style from the “condescension” of “American Spirits” and “Baby” to the unexpected “lyricism” of “Project for a Trip to China” and “Unguided Tour,” the latter being “Sontag’s apotheosis as a fiction writer” and her “long-delayed admission” that she is, after all, an “American.”

J284 Tyler, Anne. *New Republic*, 25 Nov. 1978, 29–30.

Quotes Sontag on the way the fantastic “stuff” of her fiction “starts cooking” internally as the key to Sontag’s self-obsessed characters and to the “self-addressed” quality of Sontag-the-narrator, especially in “Project for a Trip to China” and “Unguided Tour,” a quality that leaves the reader feeling “cheated” of unity or closure.

J284a Excerpts. In *Contemporary Literary Criticism*, Vol. 13, edited by Dedria Bryfonski, 516. Detroit: Gale Research, 1980.

J285 Towers, Robert. “Verbal Constructs.” *New York Times Book Review*, 26 Nov. 1978, 10.

Praises Sontag’s unexpected skill—given her formalist aesthetic—at evoking “repeated sighs of recognition” via her depiction of “the exhausted world we inhabit.”

J286 McNear, Suzanne. “Sontag as Storyteller: Humorous, Clever, and Unconventional.” *Book World (Chicago Tribune)*, 10 Dec. 1978, 8.

J287 Breslin, John B. “Complexities of Consciousness.” *Book World (Washington Post)*, 17 Dec. 1978, E3.

Takes Sontag’s B30 defense of pornography, for depicting “extreme states” of mind, as a key to her short fiction. Notes the forms Sontag’s stories take (sci-fi, morality play, literary parody) and praises their capacity to illuminate “our contemporary situation.”

J287a Excerpts. In *Contemporary Literary Criticism*, Vol. 13, edited by Dedria Bryfonski, 516–7. Detroit: Gale Research, 1980.

J288 Merkin, Daphne. Writers and Writing (“Getting Smart”). *New Leader*, 18 Dec. 1978, 12–3.

Describes the stories in A14 as “stunts—highwire acts of intellect,” some of which are movingly revelatory, others of which are “futile exercises mired in condescension.”

J289 Taliaferro, Frances. Books in Brief. *Harper’s*, Jan. 1979, 90.

Notes how “Ego and identity are at issue” in A14, but finds most of the stories “cerebrally gimmicky” and overlong.

J290 Howes, Victor. “Sontag’s Ideas in Fiction Form.” *Christian Science Monitor*, 17 Jan. 1979, 19.

Hears Sontag as “Kafka imitating Voltaire.”

J291 Wood, Michael. “This Is Not the End of the World.” *New York Review of Books*, 25 Jan. 1979, 28–31.

Compares Sontag to J.G. Ballard; suggests the stories in A14 are not only “vivid” in their “signature” (contra K75) but also refute, by recording “a life fully lived” in the face of doubt, “the terminal dreams” of Ballard’s stories.

J291a Excerpts. In *Contemporary Literary Criticism*, Vol. 13, edited by Dedria Bryfonski, 517–8. Detroit: Gale Research, 1980.

J292 O’Toole, Lawrence. “Debriefing for a Descent into Dull.” *Maclean’s* (Toronto), 29 Jan. 1979, 51.

J293 Bell, Pearl K. “Literary Waifs.” *Commentary*, Feb. 1979, 67–71.

Takes A14 as enacting the frustration with language described in “The Aesthetics of Silence”: “Outside ‘I’ lies only the tedious familiarity of etcetera.”

J294 Gitlin, Todd. “Sontag’s Stories.” *Progressive*, Mar. 1979, 58–9.

Emphasizes the “uneven” quality of the “hybrid” stories in A14, in most of which “the scraps don’t add up” because feeling or “historical situation” are lacking. Quotes Sontag quoting Goethe (in “Debriefing”) as betokening the direction (“from the inner to the outer world”) her best stories take.

J295 Stone, Laurie. “Catching the Reluctant ‘I.’” *Ms.*, Mar. 1979, 25–6, 28–9.

Takes “Debriefing” as the key to A14 because of its focus “on the dear, idiosyncratic, alienating behavior of human beings,” the story’s reticent narrator among them. Other stories embody this retreat from emotion in their evocation of “thought at the expense of feeling,” as if Sontag were trying, in the multiple identities (the “I’s”) of her fiction, to avoid the self-revealing identity on view in *On Photography*.

J296 Wilson, Frank. *Best Sellers*, Apr. 1979, 10.

J296a Excerpts. In *Contemporary Literary Criticism*, Vol. 13, edited by Dedria Bryfonski, 519. Detroit: Gale Research, 1980.

J297 Sage, Lorna. "Anti-culture Vulture." *Observer* (London), 22 Apr. 1979, 38.

Takes A14a's stories as "subversive meditations" on Sontag's "love-hate" relationship with "the liberal imagination." Takes "Old Complaints Revisited" as closest to the heart of Sontag's matter in describing the link of "articulacy and masochism."

J298 Enright, D.J. "On the Verge." *Listener*, 26 Apr. 1979, 586.

J299 Davies, Russell. "Members Only." *New Statesman*, 11 May 1979, 689–90.

Praises the "satirical vein" of A14a—the "enjoyably horrid tale" of "American Spirits"—by contrast with the "deskbound" contests of desire and imagination evident in "Project for a Trip to China" and "Unguided Tour." Takes "Old Complaints Revisited" as the rule-proving exception in its unobstructedly honest admission that "only Members will read this book."

J300 Durrant, Digby. "Fatal Flaws." *London Magazine*, July 1979, 89–94.

J301 Paulin, Tom. "Operatic Surface, Deep Politics: Recent Fiction." *Encounter*, Aug. 1979, 51–8.

J302 Miller, Jane. "Dissenting Voices." *TLS*, 23 Nov. 1979, 41.

Describes the narrators in A14a as voices seeking to escape roles and commitments only to discover that such escapes have themselves "been written into the script."

J303 Garrett, George. "Technics and Pyrotechnics." *Sewanee Review* 88 (Summer 1980):412–23.

Praises Sontag's A14 "pathos" for "the intellectual's inability to *feel things* deeply or compassionately" as (paradoxically) confounding the claim that experimentalist fiction tends toward narrational alienation.

BRIEF REVIEWS: *Library Journal* 15 Sept. 1978, 1769; *Publishers Weekly*, 25 Sept. 1978, 128; *Booklist*, 1 Oct. 1978, 278; *Kirkus Reviews*, 1 Oct. 1978, 1090; *National Review*, 27 Oct. 1978, 1357; *Antioch Review* 37 (Winter 1979): 125–6; *Choice*, Feb. 1979, 1669; *Publishers Weekly*, 13 Aug. 1979, 64; *New York Times Book Review*, 28 Oct. 1979, 55.

### UNDER THE SIGN OF SATURN (A15)

J304 Leonard, John. Books of The Times. *New York Times*, 13 Oct. 1980, C22.

Hears Sontag as having a new voice in A15. She is "better acquainted with love and irony...as personal emotions." At times ironic, humorous, playful, thought-provoking and too lavish with her praise, she remains a "first rate critic."

J304a "Under the Sign of Saturn." *Books of the Times*, Dec. 1980, 601–3.

J305 Krim, Seymour. "Susan Sontag: Shifting from High to Low Gear." *Book World (Chicago Tribune)*, 19 Oct. 1980, 3.

Describes A15 as a continuation of Sontag's "missionary work in behalf of contemporary European culture heroes (and villains)" that started with A2.

J306 Lahr, John. "Box Seat at the Theater of Ideas." *Book World (Washington Post)*, 26 Oct. 1980, 3, 14.

Describes A15 as a "spiritual autobiography." Finds her assessment of Artaud "misguided," of Benjamin partial. Praises "Fascinating Fascism" as the most "astute" essay in the book.

J307 Kermodé, Frank. "Alien Sages." *New York Review of Books*, 6 Nov. 1980, 42-3.

Discusses the "cultic" aura surrounding "alien sages" in a time when nobody knows "what it means to be educated." Praises Sontag's A15 analysis of Artaud as "urgent, bold," while upbraiding the "hero worship" style of her writing.

J307a Excerpts. In *Contemporary Literary Criticism*, Vol. 31, edited by Jean C. Stine and Daniel G. Marowski, 413-5. Detroit: Gale Research, 1985.

J308 Rosenbaum, Jonathan. "Under the Sign of Sontag." *Soho News*, 12-18 Nov. 1980, 16.

Links Sontag's essay on Syberberg's *Hitler to Death Kit* in that both are "hopeless, obsessional; and, finally, self-regarding." Takes A15 as a "speculative self-portrait" that suppresses "social context" in its Olympian descriptions of "misogynist book-worms" and "solitary visionaries."

J309 Bromwich, David. "Large and Dangerous Subjects." *New York Times Book Review*, 23 Nov. 1980, 11, 38-9.

Ponders the "tension" between the recalcitrant artists Sontag admires in A15 and her task as advocate or publicist. Takes the analysis of Walter Benjamin as typifying her "domestication of agony" to the extent that Sontag underplays his (Nietzschean) destructiveness and overstates his confidence in the "self."

J310 May, Charles. "Under the Sign of Saturn." In *Magill's Literary Annual 1981*, Vol. 2, edited by Frank N. Magill, 848-52. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Salem Press, 1981.

Observes Sontag's saturnine kinship to her A15 subjects, as well as the paradox of praising the Wagnerianism of Syberberg while attacking the aestheticism of Leni Riefenstahl.

J311 Scott, Nathan A., Jr. "For Interpretation." *American Scholar* 50 (Summer 1981):400, 402, 404, 406.

Notes the irony with which A15 confirms Sontag's talent "for interpretation," despite A2; the irony, as well, in her canonizing of those she extols for their adversarial extremity.

\*J312 Plummer, William. "Side by Side by Sontag." *Ambassador*, Mar. 1981, 85-6, 89, 91-2.

Cited in 17.

J313 Woodcock, G. "The Public Critics." *Sewanee Review* 89 (Oct.–Dec. 1981):611–21.

Takes Sontag's empathetic praise of Paul Goodman as evincing her concern for "moral rather than literary criticism."

J314 Janes, Regina. "Illusions of Decisiveness in Susan Sontag." *Salmagundi* No. 55 (Winter 1982):226–31.

Observes various identifications and reversals, of maker and auditor, of Sontag and (especially) Riefenstahl, whom Sontag attacks in terms uncannily similar to those used in praise of Artaud and Canetti. Takes Sontag's models and her (their) aphoristic style as seeking to avoid "use," to be in that sense liberating, hence social.

J315 Conrad, Peter. "Dark Lady of Letters." *Observer* (London), 19 June 1983, 31.

Describes [A15h](#) as "quite traditional" for "a theorist of the avant-garde," [A1n](#) as "an extrapolation of Sontag's critical method." Both involve "a ritual celebration of something we can never know, and should never presume to know."

J316 Sigal, Clancy. "Match of Champions." *Guardian Weekly* (Manchester), 17 July 1983, 21.

J317 Cook, Jon. "Six to One." *New Statesman*, 2 Sept. 1983, 22–3.

Describes [A15h](#) as "a counter-feminist work." Male writers are praised for opposing cultural regression, while Leni Riefenstahl is attacked, however positively self-critical Sontag manages to be in her critique of fascist aesthetics.

BRIEF REVIEWS: *Kirkus Reviews*, 1 Aug. 1980, 1071; *Publishers Weekly*, 8 Aug. 1980, 74; *Booklist*, 15 Sept. 1980, 80; *Saturday Review*, Oct. 1980, 89–90; *Best Sellers*, Dec. 1980, 322; *Library Journal*, 1 Dec. 1980, 2500; *Performing Arts Journal* 5.2 (1981):123; *Quest*, Mar. 1981, 68; *Publishers Weekly*, 11 Sept. 1981, 71; *New York Times Book Review*, 22 Nov. 1981, 51; *Essais: Bulletin critique du livre français*, 1985, 1310–1.

### A BARTHES READER ([A17](#))

J318 Hinerfeld, Susan Slocum. "His One Greatest Subject Was Himself...." *Book Review (Los Angeles Times)*, 5 Sept. 1982, 3.

Calls Sontag's introduction a "judgment more than kind" in view of Barthes's hilarious self-absorption.

J319 White, Edmund. "From Albert Camus to Roland Barthes." *New York Times Book Review*, 12 Sept. 1982, 1, 34.

Reads [A17](#) as "a convincing argument" for Barthes's status as a great writer.

J320 Brooks, Peter. "Savant of Signs." *New Republic*, 11 Oct. 1982, 27–31.

J321 Plummer, William. "The Demystifier." *Newsweek*, 11 Oct. 1982, 106.

Describes [A17](#) as a "Michelin guide to one of the most beguiling minds of our era."

J322 Lavers, Annette. "The Essential Barthes?" *New Society*, 4 Nov. 1982, 224–5.

J323 Howard, Richard. "Remembering Roland Barthes." *Nation*, 20 Nov. 1982, 525–7.

J324 Heath, Stephen. "A World of Difference." *TLS*, 10 Dec. 1982, 1372.

J325 Sjøvik, Jan. "A Barthes Reader." In *Magill's Literary Annual 1983*, Vol. 1, edited Frank N. Magill, 44–8. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Salem Press, 1983.

Reviews Barthes's career by repeated reference to essays Sontag did *not* include in [A17](#).

BRIEF REVIEWS: *Publishers Weekly*, 11 June 1982, 55; *Library Journal*, Aug. 1982, 1463; *Commonweal*, 3 Dec. 1982, 664–6; *Publishers Weekly*, 10 June 1983, 60.

### A SUSAN SONTAG READER ([A18](#))

J326 Kendrick, Walter. "In a Gulf of Her Own." *Nation*, 23 Oct. 1982, 404–6.

Sees Sontag as "inhabiting" the gulf between academia and journalism, or between Europe and America. Takes the absence of "Trip to Hanoi" as making Sontag look "placidly detached," Sontag's portrait of Roland Barthes as repressing "the danger in Barthes," hence as typical of her talent for "domestication."

*J326a* Excerpts. In *Contemporary Literary Criticism*, Vol. 31, edited by Jean C. Stine and Daniel G. Marowski, 417–8. Detroit: Gale Research, 1985.

J327 Cook, Bruce. "On Good Authority, a Tentativity." *Book Review (Los Angeles Times)*, 12 Dec. 1982, 2.

Less a review of [A18](#) than of Sontag's improvisatory life-story. Admires the admixture of tentativeness and authority (learned, presumably, from Benjamin and Barthes) that characterizes her later work.

J328 Winders, James A. "A Susan Sontag Reader." In *Magill's Literary Annual 1983*, Vol. 2, edited Frank N. Magill, 769–72. Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Salem Press, 1983.

Observes Sontag's intellectual and political "elusiveness" despite her loyalty to Montaigne; defends Sontag against Rich ([K62](#)) and Grenier ([H103](#)).

J329 Marcus, Greil. "Paper Tiger." *California Magazine*, Jan. 1983, 97–9.

Takes a concern with heroism as "the key" to [A18](#). Though "Fascinating Fascism" withdraws the attribution of genius to Riefenstahl, Sontag effectively seconds Syberberg's "corrupt" treatment of Hitler as "an aesthetic figure" by celebrating Syberberg's genius. Takes this concern for "European genius" as proving that Sontag is an anti- or "un-American critic."

J330 Mudrick, Marvin. "Susie Creamcheese Makes Love Not War: What Susan Sontag Is Full of." *Harper's*, Feb. 1983, 62–5.

Attacks Sontag's style (and her devotion to style) by sardonic mimicry.

J331 Davidon, Ann Morrissett. "Queen Critic." *Progressive*, Mar. 1983, 60–1.

Better than half of this review of [A18](#) deconstructively reviews its other (mostly male) reviewers.

J332 Ross, Mitchell. *American Spectator*, Mar. 1983, 39–40.

Describes [A18](#) as "caught between the *Kultur* of Kant and the culture of Greenwich Village."

J333 Brown, Spencer. "Five Women Critics." *Sewanee Review* 92 (Fall 1984): 649–60.

Describes "all learning" as Sontag's "province," though one "ill-governed," if only because "she contains multitudes." Finds the unanswerably "wire-drawn" tightness of Sontag's reasoning admirable but infuriating.

J334 Thomson, Ian. "Special Notices." *London Magazine*, July 1984, 103–6.

BRIEF REVIEWS: *Kirkus Reviews*, 1 Aug. 1982, 931; *Booklist*, 15 Sept. 1982, 88; *Publishers Weekly*, 17 Sept. 1982, 105; *Commonweal*, 3 Dec. 1982, 664–6; *Performing Arts Journal* 7.1 (1983):132; *Christian Science Monitor*, 2 Feb. 1983, 15; *Publishers Weekly*, 12 Aug. 1983, 64; *Observer* (London), 25 Sept. 1983, 31; *Books and Bookmen*, Nov. 1983, 36–7.

### ALICE IN BED ([A25B](#))

J335 *Publishers Weekly*, 28 June 1993, 70.

Describes Sontag's first play as disappointing.

J336 Mulac, Carolyn M. *Library Journal*, July 1993, 82.

J337 Seaman, Donna. "Women Playwrights." *Booklist*, Aug. 1993, 2031.

J338 Urbanski, Marie Olesen. "A Festering Rage." *Book Review* (*Los Angeles Times*), 10 Oct. 1993, 8.

Grants the difficulty of dramatizing an "internal conflict" of a woman paralyzed by rage; reports the play's success abroad.

### THE WAY WE LIVE NOW ([A27](#))

J339 Roudiez, Leon S. *World Literature Today* 66 (Autumn 1992): 723.

Praises the hopeful indirection of Sontag's compassionate prose as it plays against "the thickening atmosphere" connoted in Howard Hodgkin's illustrations.

J340 MacAdam, Barbara A. "Speaking of the Unspeakable." *Artnews*, Mar. 1992, 20.

Praises the collaboration of words (Sontag) and images (Hodgkin) for undertaking "to capture fluctuating emotions and impressions" of the illness called AIDS.

J341 McFall, Gardner. *New York Times Book Review*, 1 Mar. 1992, 20.

Reads [A27b](#)'s "haunting" treatment of AIDS as "an allegory for our time."

J342 Dinnage, Rosemary. "Learning How to Die." *TLS*, 22 Mar. 1991, 19.

Notes how [A27](#) “compressed all that [Sontag] explored in *Illness as Metaphor* and *AIDS and Its Metaphors*.”

### THE VOLCANO LOVER: A ROMANCE ([A28](#))

J343 Max, Daniel. Bookshelf (“Tricky Nelson and the Lady”). *Wall Street Journal*, 30 July 1992, [A11](#)(E).

Compares [A28](#) to sources and Sontag’s other writings; concludes that the historical aspect of the novel is subordinated to “contemporary social and political concerns,” though “it is carried off with little heart.”

J344 Eckhoff, Sally S. *Voice Literary Supplement*, July–Aug. 1992, 13–4.

J345 Jones, Kaylie. “Taking out the Trash.” *Harper’s Bazaar*, Aug. 1992, 42.

J346 Warner, Marina. Books (“On Naples, Love, and Lava”). *Vogue*, Aug. 1992, 148.

Notes the irony of [A28](#)’s two titles, in that Sontag fails to resist “Emma Hamilton’s generous proportions” despite the fact that all the (sexual, political) romances in this “Romance” are “poisoned” by excess. Praises the closing chorus of female voices; concludes that only Sir William “appears to win the author’s own allegiance.”

J347 Kakutani, Michiko. Books of The Times (“History Mixed with Passion and Ideas”). *New York Times*, 4 Aug. 1992, C16.

Praises [A28](#)’s “intimate and friendly” voice and the “firm moral and political point of view” achieved by setting its action against the background of the Neapolitan revolution.

J348 Banville, John. “By Lava Possessed.” *New York Times Book Review*, 9 Aug. 1992, 1, 26–7.

Contrasts Sontag’s avant-garde reputation with her “old fashioned” achievement in [A28](#). Praises her account of the Cavaliere. Finds the book “curiously hollow” for lacking coldness of heart, as if Sontag “cares too much.”

J349 Slavitt, David R. “Susan Sontag Creates a Bold Historical Romance that Finally Mocks Itself.” *Books (Chicago Tribune)*, 9 Aug. 1992, 4, 6.

J350 Rubin, Merle. “Susan Sontag’s Cavalier Cavaliere.” *Christian Science Monitor*, 11 Aug. 1992, 11.

Praises Sontag’s “devastating” depiction of “how seemingly minor moral blindness can lead to major moral catastrophes.”

J351 Byatt, A.S. “Love and Death in the Shadow of Vesuvius.” *Book World (Washington Post)*, 16 Aug. 1992, 1–2.

Praises the narrator’s “detached, energetic curiosity.” Takes the “stench and shadow of Death” as lending the book “a kind of tragic dignity, beyond the absurd.” Describes Sontag’s melding of art styles and historical vantages as making [A28](#) “a slippery, intelligent, provocative and gripping book.”

J352 Eder, Richard. “That Hamilton Woman.” *Book Review (Los Angeles Times)*, 16 Aug. 1992, 3, 7.

Describes A28 as “both great fun and serious fun.” Sees the wife as “a Real Woman,” for whom “male reality” is “a burden”; sees the Cavaliere as a collector collected. Notes the fourth dimension that narrative digressions add to its 3D story.

J353 Koenig, Rhoda. “Past Imperfect, Future Wacked-Out.” *New York*, 17 Aug. 1992, 50–2.

Sees A28’s philosophical asides as less wild and successful than the sex scenes, Sontag’s talent as “at odds” with the historical novel form.

J354 Sheppard, R.Z. “Lava Soap.” *Time*, 17 Aug. 1992, 66–7.

Castigates A28 for its “jarring” feminist conclusion, as if “Sontag, like Vesuvius, simply blew her top.”

J355 Klepp, L.S. “Kingdom of Excess.” *Entertainment Weekly*, 21 Aug. 1992, 52.

Likens Sontag to Stendahl for the expansiveness of her A28 portrait of Italy, while finding the love triangle of its “romance” plot “lopsided” in its antipathy to “the hero.”

J356 Gates, David. “There Is No Crater Love.” *Newsweek*, 24 Aug. 1992, 63.

Describes A28 as narratively “amateurish,” while praising the book’s “small, smart details” and its closing monologues.

J357 Simon, John. “The Valkyrie of Lava.” *National Review*, 31 Aug. 1992, 63–5.

Takes A28 as “anti-romance” in demythologizing its central characters, including the Cavaliere, to whom, in his aestheticism, Sontag herself seems closest. Decries various contradictory aphorisms as prologue to observing how the “volcano lover” trope itself “misfires, remains dormant.”

J358 Keates, Jonathan. “The Antique Collector’s Guide.” *TLS*, 25 Sept. 1992, 24.

Describes Sontag as “both epicure and glutton” in her depiction of historical events in A28b, while objecting to the narrator’s “inopportune rhetorical musings.”

J359 Gilbert, Harriett. “Passion Play.” *New Statesman and Society*, 2 Oct. 1992, 43–4.

J360 Bardacke, Francis L. “The Hero and the Beauty.” *San Diego Magazine*, Nov. 1992, 62, 64.

Disputes Banville (J348); what he describes as “hollowness” is better seen as “space” or “distance,” of Sontag from her characters, from her readers, a space effectively closed in the concluding monologue. Notes how emphasizing the Cavaliere is itself a “deromanticizing” gesture, for downplaying “the hero” even while making the central ménage-à-trois credible.

J361 Toynton, Evelyn. “The Critic as Novelist.” *Commentary*, Nov. 1992, 62–4.

Compares Sontag’s “dictatorial” critical procedure to the “suffocatingly humorless” surface-skimming “string of verdicts and summations” that comprises A28.

J362 Colley, Linda. "Elitism." *London Review of Books*, 3 Dec. 1992, 18.

Avows that Sontag uses history as a novelistic crutch, while asserting that the best reasons for reading [A28b](#) are the philosophical "snippets it contains of Sontag herself."

J363 Rodgers, Bernard F., Jr. "The Volcano Lover." In *Magill's Literary Annual 1993*, Vol. 2, edited by Frank N. Magill, 856–9. Pasadena, CA: Salem Press, 1993.

Takes [A28](#) as a "turning point" in Sontag's career, for evincing a "newfound interest in realistic description" and characterization but also for the time its success will allow her away from the demands of literary journalism. Compares the expansiveness of [A28](#) to the interiority of [A1](#) and [A3](#), Sontag's "polyphonic" method and voice to Milan Kundera's.

J364 Wilhelmus, Tom. "Time and Distance." *Hudson Review* 46 (Spring 1993): 247–55.

Takes Nietzsche's notion of eternal recurrence as key to a number of recent "historical" novels. Describes [A28](#) as more interested in "literary-historical byplay" and "aesthetic matters" than with historical "verisimilitude."

J365 Wineapple, Brenda. "Damn Them All." *Belles Lettres* 8.3 (Spring 1993): 2–3, 60–1.

Takes the women-voiced finale of [A28](#) as culminating Sontag's self-consciously feminist perspective.

J366 Arreguy, Clara. "O terceiro romance da ensaísta Susan Sontag." *Journal Estada de Minas* (Belo Horizonte, Brazil), 4 Aug. 1993, sec. 2, 8.

Emphasizes the distanced impersonality of narration in [A28h](#) that permits sympathetic portrayals of horrific characters whose acts are thereby rendered all the more horrific.

J367 Gingrass, Lynn. "Marked by Contrariness." *American Book Review*, Aug.–Sept. 1993, 28.

Takes the Cavaliere as a Canetti-esque monomaniac. Likens [A28](#)'s inclusive scope to the "eccentric architectural marvels her characters tour," while asserting that the technique is less dramatic than dioramic—until the final monologues raise the book "to another level," giving it "a kind of odd coherence."

BRIEF REVIEWS: *Booklist*, 1 June 1992, 1733; *Publishers Weekly*, 8 June 1992, 52; *Library Journal*, 15 June 1992, 103; *Cosmopolitan*, Aug. 1992, 26; *Economist*, 15 Aug. 1992, 79; *People Weekly*, 21 Sept. 1992, 34–5; *Artforum*, Nov. 1992, 9; *Atlantic*, Nov. 1992, 162; *Chatelaine*, Nov. 1992, 8; *Antioch Review* 51 (Spring 1993):305; *Common Knowledge* 2.2 (Fall 1993):165; *Entertainment Weekly*, 8 Oct. 1993, 49.

### THE BEST AMERICAN ESSAYS 1992 ([A29](#))

J368 *Publishers Weekly*, 19 Oct. 1992, 72.

Questions the inclusion of an essay by Sontag's son, even while describing it as a "highlight" of [A29](#).

J369 Seaman, Donna. *Booklist*, 1 Nov. 1992, 480.

Praises A29 as “a superb collection.”

J370 Shires, Nancy. *Library Journal*, 1 Nov. 1992, 85.

Notes a discrepancy between the essayistic values Sontag praises in her introduction (precision, transparency) and the “convoluted form” of many of the essays she included.

## SECTION K

### Miscellaneous

K1 Rieff, Philip. *Freud: The Mind of the Moralizer*. New York: Viking Press; Macmillan Co. of Canada, 1959.

Sontag's collaboration in K1, implicit in the K34 stipulation that she agreed to Rieff's claim of sole authorship in their divorce settlement, is explicit in the "special thanks" she is proffered (as "Susan Rieff") in K1's Preface. Topics defining of Sontag's intellectual itinerary are evident throughout, as can be gleaned from chapter titles alone: "The Hidden Self," "The Tactics of Interpretation," "The Authority of the Past." Many readers of K1 will likely hear Sontag's voice as part of the book's conversation with itself and its sources, via references (for example) to William Empson and Kenneth Burke, to Proust and Shakespeare and Mann, to Nietzsche and Goethe, etc.

\*K1a *Freud: The Mind of the Moralizer*. London: V.Gollancz, 1959. [1960?]

K1b *Freud: The Mind of the Moralizer*. Garden City, NY: Anchor, Doubleday, 1961.  
Revises K1; acknowledgment of Sontag is dropped.

\*K1c *Freud: The Mind of the Moralizer*. 2d ed. London: Methuen, 1965.  
Reprints K1b.

\*K1d *Freud moralista*. Trans. (Ital.) Anna Oppo. Bologna: Il mulino, 1968.

K1e *Freud: The Mind of the Moralizer*. 3d ed. Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1979.  
Reprints K1, with only a few of the K1b changes. An epilogue ("One Step Further") added to this edition can be read as a critique of Sontag's "new sensibility."

K2 Abel, Lionel. Correspondence. *Partisan Review* 30 (Fall 1963): 471–3, 475.  
Replies to D6.

K3 Bellow, Saul. "A Comment on 'Form and Despair.'" *Location* 1.2 (Summer 1964):10–2.

Replies to Harold Rosenberg regarding the neglect of literary form and the reductively “Calvinistic” tenor of contemporary literary debate. Cites [D12](#) as similarly reductive, diagnostic.

K4 “The Individualists: Mlle’s Annual Merit Awards.” *Mademoiselle*, Jan. 1964, 72–4.

K5 Howard, Richard. Letters (“Problems of Translation”). *New York Review of Books*, 19 Mar. 1964, 22.

K6 Maloff, Saul. Letters (“Ad Feminam”). *New York Times Book Review*, 31 May 1964, 8.

Replies to Sontag’s [G26](#) defense of Alfred Chester.

K7 Taste (“Camp”) *Time*, 11 Dec. 1964, 75.

Quotes [B11](#) at some length, paying particular attention to the homosexual inheritance (Wilde, Genet) of “camp.”

K8 Simon, John. Correspondence (“Two Camps”). *Partisan Review* 32 (Winter 1965):154, 157.

Critiques [B11](#) and “camp” alike. See [G27](#).

K9 Enck, John J. “John Barth: An Interview.” *Wisconsin Studies in Contemporary Literature* 6 (Winter-Spring 1965):3–14.

Barth criticizes the artifice of *The Benefactor* while averring that “Susan Sontag does not exist.”

*K9a* John Earth.” In *The Contemporary Writer: Interviews with Sixteen Novelists and Poets*, edited by L.S.Dembo and Cyrena N.Pondrom, 18–29. Madison: Univ. of Wisconsin Press, 1972.

K10 Brien, Alan. “The World of Susan Sontag.” *Spectator* (London), 22 Jan. 1965, 97–8.

K11 Burke, Kenneth. “*Somnia ad Urinandum* (More Thoughts on Motion and Action.)” *Limbo* (Vancouver, BC) 1.12 (Feb. 1965): 30–47.

Urges that dreams may work less by repression than metaphor; takes an [A1](#) “dream” as exemplification.

*K11 a* “*Somnia ad Urinandum*: More Thoughts on Motion and Action.” In *Language as Symbolic Action: Essays on Life, Literature, and Method*, 344–58. Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 1966.

K12 Meehan, Tom. “Not Good Taste, Not Bad Taste, It’s Camp.” *New York Times Magazine*, 21 Mar. 1965, 30, 113–5.

K13 “A Vest-Pocket Guide to Camp.” *Life*, 20 Aug. 1965, 84.

\*K14 Axelsson, Sun, et al. “Min Camp.” *Chaplin* (Stockholm) No. 68 (1966): 358–61.

Sixteen Swedish film critics respond to [B11a](#).

K15 “Note to the Reader.” In *The Great Ideas Today 1966*, edited by Robert M.Hutchins and Mortimer J.Adler, 192–3. Chicago: Encyclopedia Britannica; New York: F.A.Praeger, 1966.

Critiques Sontag’s B23 claims for modernist fiction.

K16 Navasky, Victor S. “Notes on Cult; or, How to Join the Intellectual Establishment.” *New York Times Magazine*, 27 Mar. 1966, 28–9, 125–8.

K17 Abel, Lionel. “So Who’s Not Mad?: On Marat/Sade and Nihilism.” *Dissent*, Mar-Apr. 1966, 164–72.

K17a “Who’s Not Mad?: On *Marat/Sade* and Nihilism.” In *Important Nonsense*, 213–20. Buffalo, NY: Prometheus Books, 1987.

K18 Gornick, Vivian. “Pop Goes Homosexual: It’s a Queer Hand Stoking the Campfire.” *Village Voice*, 7 Apr. 1966, 1, 20–1.

K19 People Are Talking about... (“Sontag & Son”). *Vogue*, June 1966, 96–7.

K20 Rubin, Louis D., Jr. “The Curious Death of the Novel: or, What to Do about Tired Literary Critics.” *Kenyon Review* 28 (June 1966): 305–25.

K20a “The Curious Death of the Novel: or, What to Do about Tired Literary Critics.” In *The Curious Death of the Novel: Essays in American Literature*, 3–23. Baton Rouge: Louisiana State Univ. Press, 1967.

K21 American Association of University Women. *Idealism at Work: Eighty Years of AAUW Fellowships, A Report*. Washington, DC, 1967.

Profiles Sontag in connection with the dissertation fellowship she received from AAUW.

K22 Chester, Alfred. *The Exquisite Corpse*. New York: Simon & Schuster, 1967.

The “form” unfolding in this novel-length version of the surrealist parlor game is “destiny,” experienced as death, poverty, disfigurement, expulsion, injustice, abasement, betrayal, impalement, denial. Its unconscious, “folded in” as texts are passed from player to player, is a series of doublings, of characters living multiple lives, bearing multiple names, crossing paths across forty-nine chapters. Mary Poor Poor and her son Baby Poor Poor, purportedly modeled on Sontag and son David (see K221), are two among the many, though Baby, as John Anthony, as James Madison, as Veronica, as Julie English, has the larger role; indeed, as a changeling, kidnapped by film noir fairies, he tropes the biblical burden of identities, faces, masks; condemned to exist, but always (it seems) in the wrong place, the wrong family, the wrong universe.

\*K22a *The Exquisite Corpse*. London: A.Deutsch, 1970.

- \*K22b            *The Exquisite Corpse*. [London:] Sphere, [1971].
- K22c            *The Exquisite Corpse*. New York: Carroll & Graf Publishers, 1986.
- K23 Simon, John. "Godard and the Godardians: A Study in the New Sensibility." In *Private Screenings*, 272–96. New York: Macmillan, 1967.
- K23a            "Godard and the Godardians: A Study in the New Sensibility." In *Private Screenings*, 306–32. New York: Berkeley Medallion Books, 1971.
- K24 Macklin, F.Anthony. "Editorial: Return to Meaning." *Film Heritage* 2.4 (Summer 1967):1–2, 36–9.
- K25 Brien, Alan. "Campers' Guide." *New Statesman*, 23 June 1967, 873–4.
- K26 Heilbrun, Carolyn G. "Speaking of Susan Sontag." *New York Times Book Review*, 27 Aug. 1967, 2, 30.
- K27 Vidal, Gore. "French Letters: The Theory of the New Novel." *Encounter*, Dec. 1967, 13–23.  
    Addresses the status of the novel; adduces [B4](#) and [B23](#).
- K27a            "French Letters: Theories of the New Novel." In *Reflections Upon a Sinking Ship*, 12–40. Boston: Little, Brown & Co.; Toronto: Little, Brown & Co. (Canada), 1969.
- K27b            "French Letters: Theories of the New Novel." In *Matters of Fact and of Fiction: Essays 1973–1976*, 65–88. New York: Random House; Toronto: Random House of Canada, 1977.
- K27c            "French Letters: Theories of the New Novel." In *The Art of the Critic: Literary Theory and Criticism from the Greeks to the Present*, Vol. 10, Contemporary, edited by Harold Bloom, 415–32. New York: Chelsea House Publishers, 1990.
- K27d            "French Letters: Theories of the New Novel." In *United States: Essays 1952–1992*, 89–110. New York: Random House; Toronto: Random House of Canada; London: Andre Deutsch, 1993.
- K28 Green, Martin. "British Marxists and American Freudians." In *Innovations: Essays on Art and Ideas*, edited by Bernard Bergonzi, 159–84. London: Macmillan, 1968.
- K28a            "British Marxists and American Freudians." In *Literature and Society*, Literary Taste, Culture and Mass Communication, Vol. 5, edited by Peter Davison, Rolf Meyersohn, and Edward

Shils, 177–203. Cambridge: Chadwyck-Healey; Teaneck, NJ: Somerset House, 1978.

K29 Jarosy, Ivo. Correspondence (“Persona”). *Sight and Sound* 37 (Winter 1967–68):52.

Responds to [B31](#).

K30 Regelson, Rosalyn. “Up the Camp Staircase.” *New York Times*, 3 Mar. 1968, sec. 2, 1, 14.

K31 Howe, Irving. “The New York Intellectuals: A Chronicle and a Critique.” *Commentary*, Oct. 1968, 29–51.

*K31a* “The New York Intellectuals.” In *Decline of the New*, 211–65. New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, 1970.

*K31b* “The New York Intellectuals” In *Selected Writings 1950–1990*, 240–80. San Diego: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1990.

K32 Kauffmann, Stanley. Stanley Kauffmann on Films (“The Long Weekend”). *New Republic*, 19 Oct. 1968, 28, 40.

Critiques Godard’s *Weekend* via [B34](#).

*K32a* “Weekend.” In *Figures of Light: Film Criticism and Comment*, 109–12. New York: Harper & Row, 1971.

Reprints the Godard/Sontag portion of [K32](#).

K33 This Week (“The Peripatetic Sycophant”). *National Review*, 8 Apr. 1969, 314–20.

Critiques (p. 319) [B38](#).

K34 “Sontag, Susan.” *Current Biography* 30.6 (June 1969):41–3.

Sketches Sontag’s career. Notes her collaboration with Philip Rieff on *Freud: The Mind of the Moralists*.

*K34a* “Sontag, Susan.” In *Current Biography Yearbook 1969*, edited by Charles Moritz, 413–5. New York: H.W. Wilson Co., 1969.

K35 Chester, Alfred. “The Foot.” *New American Review* No. 9 (1970): 5–56.

A madman’s diary in which all other people are only “illusions of other people” and “each and every one of them” is the narrator’s self. One such is “Mary Monday,” an intellectual divorcée with a young son who meets herself one day in a public square; her adventures in otherness recall [C1](#).

*K35a* “The Foot.” In *Head of a Sad Angel: Stories 1953–1966*, by Alfred Chester, edited by Edward Field, 247–300. Santa Rosa, CA: Black Sparrow Press, 1990.

K36 Saporta, Marc. "Le secteur de la recherche." In *Histoire du roman américain*, 276–92. Paris: Éditions Seghers, 1970.

Sontag's debts to surrealism and the new novel are discussed in a section on experimental fiction ("Échapper à la raison").

K37 Kavolis, Vytautas. "The Social Psychology of Avant-Garde Cultures." *Studies in the 20th Century* No. 6 (Fall 1970):13–34.

K38 Wellek, René. "American Criticism of the Last Ten Years." In *Amerikanische Literatur im 20. Jahrhundert*, edited by Alfred Weber and Dietmar Haack, 13–28. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1971.

K38a "American Criticism of the Last Ten Years." *Yearbook of Comparative and General Literature* No. 20 (1971): 5–14.

K38b "American Criticism of the Sixties." In *The Attack on Literature and Other Essays*, 104–18, 169. Chapel Hill: Univ. of North Carolina Press, 1982.

K39 Bellow, Saul. "Culture Now: Some Animadversions, Some Laughs." *Modern Occasions* 1 (Winter 1971):162–78.

Discusses H16 at length.

K40 Rahv, Philip. "Cultural Malaise and Ultimate Culpability." *Modern Occasions* 1 (Fall 1971):461–8.

Critiques Bell (K43); denies that the "new sensibility" (alone, in fact) has "fused" politics and art.

K41 Rochberg, George. "The Avant-Garde and the Aesthetics of Survival." *New Literary History* 3 (Autumn 1971):71–92.

K42 Jameson, Fredric. "Metacommentary." *PMLA* 86 (Jan. 1971): 9–18.

Adduces A2 as instancing the way critical reluctance to privilege content over form evinces a "slippage" of form into content. Takes the need for interpretation, or its absence (in the "novel of plot"), or its interiorization (in the psychological novel), as itself in need of metacommentary—which proceeds by undoing the (manifest) censorship that "disguises" (latent) meaning in the first place. Takes B20 as exemplary.

K42a "Toward Dialectical Criticism." In *Marxism and Form: Twentieth-Century Dialectical Theories of Literature*, 306–416. Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 1971.

Pages 16–7 of K42 are incorporated into the last segment of this last chapter of *Marxism and Form*.

K42b "Metacommentary." In *Contemporary Literary Criticism: Modernism through Post-Structuralism*, edited by Robert Con Davis, 112–23. New York: Longman, 1986.

- K42c "Metacommentary." In *The Ideologies of Theory: Essays 1971–1986*, Vol. 1, *Situations of Theory*, 3–16. Minneapolis: Univ. of Minnesota Press, 1988.
- K43 Bell, Daniel. "Sensibility in the 60's." *Commentary*, June 1971, 63–73.
- K43a "The Sensibility of the Sixties." In *The Cultural Contradictions of Capitalism*, 120–45. New York: Basic Books, 1976.
- K44 Brustein, Robert. "If an Artist Wants to Be Serious and Respected and Rich, Famous and Popular, He Is Suffering from Cultural Schizophrenia." *New York Times Magazine*, 26 Sept. 1971, 12–3, 85–9.
- K45 Kadushin, Charles. "Who Are the Elite Intellectuals?" *Public Interest* No. 29 (Fall 1972):109–25.
- Sontag is rated among the ten "most prestigious" intellectuals circa 1970 by her periodical peers.
- K45a "Who Are the Elite American Intellectuals?" In *The American Intellectual Elite*, 3–38. Boston: Little, Brown & Co., 1974. Reprints a considerably expanded K45. (Chapter 7 of the book just cited adduces "Trip to Hanoi" repeatedly.)
- K46 Stark, John. "Camping Out: Tiny Alice and Susan Sontag." *Players* 47 (Apr.–May 1972):166–9.
- K47 Jencks, Charles. "Recent American Architecture: Camp—Non Camp." In *Modern Movements in Architecture*, 184–237, 389–91. Garden City, NY: Anchor Press, Doubleday, 1973.
- Cites at length a BBC exchange between Philip Johnson and Sontag.
- K47a "Recent American Architecture: Camp—Non Camp." In *Modern Movements in Architecture*, 2d ed., 184–237, 399–401. Harmondsworth, UK: Penguin, 1985.
- K48 Madden, David. "The Necessity for an Aesthetics of Popular Culture." *Journal of Popular Culture* 7 (Summer 1973):1–13.
- K48a "The Necessity for an Aesthetics of Popular Culture." In *The Cultural Debate Part II*, Literary Taste, Culture and Mass Communication, Vol. 14, edited by Peter Davison, Rolf Meyersohn, and Edward Shils, 195–207. Cambridge: Chadwyck-Healey; Teaneck, NJ: Somerset House, 1980.

K49 Hollander, Paul. "The Ideological Pilgrim: Looking for Utopia, Then and Now." *Encounter*, Nov. 1973, 3–15.

K49a "The Ideological Pilgrim—Looking for Utopia, Then and Now." In *The Many Faces of Socialism: Comparative Sociology and Politics*, 253–82. New Brunswick: Transaction Books, 1983.  
Reprints K49, with a 1982 postscript.

K50 Haug, Frigga. "Verteidigung der Frauenbewegung gegen den Feminismus." *Das Argument* (Berlin) 15 (Dec. 1973):938–47.

Disputes the B41c implication that there is *no* significant relationship between class struggle and women's liberation.

K51 Laurel. "Toward a Woman Vision." *Amazon Quarterly* 2.2 (1974):18–42.

Adduces Sontag as a female writer exploring "the possibilities of the male value system"—at considerable risk.

K52 Nelson, Gary. "The Paradox of Critical Language: A Polemical Speculation." *MLN* 89 (1974):1003–16.

Investigates the descent/ascent trope by which reading is described as an identity-endangering "rite of passage" and criticism as a (paradoxical) "transcendence" or "redemption" of language *by* language. Sontag is repeatedly adduced.

K53 Loewenberg, Ina. "Intentions: The Speaker and the Artist." *British Journal of Aesthetics* 15 (Winter 1974):40–9.

K54 Jeffrey, Ian. "Diane Arbus and American Freaks." *Studio International* (London) 187 (Mar. 1974): "Review" sec., 5–6.

K55 Wasson, Richard. "From Priest to Prometheus: Culture and Criticism in the Post-Modernist Period." *Journal of Modern Literature* 3 (July 1974):1188–202.

Reads "Sontag's new sensibility" as an "adjusted version" of Matthew Arnold's view of education as training in taste.

K56 Arnheim, Rudolf. "On the Nature of Photography." *Critical Inquiry* 1 (Sept. 1974):149–61.

Contrasts sociological and "media analyst" approaches to photography. B44 is adduced repeatedly.

K57 Isaac, Dan. "Some Questions about the Depiction of Jews in New Films." *New York Times*, 8 Sept. 1974, sec. 2, 13–4.

Adduces and praises *Promised Lands*.

K57a "New 'Jewish Films.'" In *The New York Times Film Reviews 1973–1974*, 262–4. New York: The New York Times & Arno Press, 1975.

K58 Levi, Albert William. "The Poverty of the Avant Garde." *Journal of Aesthetic Education* 8.4 (Oct. 1974):5–27.

K59 Grossman, Edward, et al. "Culture and the Present Moment: A Round-Table Discussion." *Commentary*, Dec. 1974, 31–50.

\*K60 Cortázar, Julio. *Fantomas contra los vampiros multinacionales: Una utopia realizable*. Mexico City: Excelsior, 1975.

Cited in Jean Franco's "Comic Stripping: Cortázar in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction," a chapter of *Julio Cortázar: New Readings*, edited by Carlos J. Alonso (Cambridge Univ. Press, 1998); see pp. 36–56. Per Franco, Sontag is a character in this Brechtian pastiche of comic book and Utopian narrative.

\*K61 Hunter, Jim. "On Camp: The Sensibility on Innocent Frivolity." *Journal of the West Virginia Philosophical Society* 9 (Fall 1975): 28–30.

Cited in *The Philosopher's Index* 10 (1976):272.

K62 Rich, Adrienne. "Feminism and Fascism: An Exchange." *New York Review of Books*, 20 Mar. 1975, 31.

Critiques [B50](#) (in light of [B41b](#)) for failing to acknowledge that the oppressive values of fascism and modernism are, in fact, those of patriarchy. See [G45](#).

K63 Hinton, David. "An Exchange on Leni Riefenstahl." *New York Review of Books*, 18 Sept. 1975, 58.

Critiques [B50](#); see [G48](#).

K64 Casebier, Allan. "Critical Interpretation." In *Film Appreciation*, 153–72. New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1976.

K65 Boyers, Robert. "Explanation and Conviction in Godard: *The Married Woman*" *Georgia Review* 30 (Fall 1976):706–24.

K65a "Explanation and Conviction in Godard: *The Married Woman*." In *After the Avant-Garde: Essays on Art and Culture*, 157–73. University Park: Pennsylvania State Univ. Press, 1988.

K66 Babuscio, Jack. "Camp and the Gay Sensibility." In *Gays and Film*, edited by Richard Dyer, 40–57. London: British Film Institute, 1977.

K66a "Camp and the Gay Sensibility." In *Gays and Film*, rev. ed., edited by Richard Dyer, 40–57. New York: New York Zoetrope, 1984.

K66b "Camp and the Gay Sensibility." In *Camp Grounds: Style and Homosexuality*, edited by David Bergman, 19–38. Amherst: Univ. of Massachusetts Press, 1993.

K67 Davis, Douglas. "Photography as Culture." In *Artculture: Essays on the Post-Modern*, 56–78. New York: Icon Editions, Harper & Row, 1977.

K68 Dickstein, Morris. "Prologue: Allen Ginsberg and the Sixties." In *Gates of Eden: American Culture in the Sixties*, 3–24, 280–1. New York: Basic Books, 1977.

Cites [B19](#) and [K31](#) as extreme (mis)readings of the era.

*K68a* "Prologue: Allen Ginsberg and the Sixties." In *Gates of Eden: American Culture in the Sixties*, 3–24, 280–1. New York: Penguin, 1989.

K69 Geber, Nils-Hugo. "Duett för kannibaler." In *Svensk filmografi*, Vol. 6, 1960–1969, edited by Jörn Dorner, 476–7. Stockholm: Svenska Filminstitutet, 1977.

Comprises a synopsis of [E2](#) and a summary of its reception.

K70 Peper, Jürgen. "Postmodernismus: *Unitary Sensibility* (Von der geschichtlichen Ordnung zum synchron-environmentalen System)." *Amerikastudien* (Stuttgart) 22 (1977):65–89.

K71 Hartman, Geoffrey H. Forum ("Reading Criticism"). *PMLA* 92 (Mar. 1977):307–8.

Replies to [H41](#).

K72 Rorem, Ned. "Vocabulary." *Christopher Street*, May 1977, 7–16.

Critiques Sontag's [B41b](#) analysis of the relations of grammar (or naming) and gender.

*K72a* "Vocabulary." In *An Absolute Gift: A New Diary*, 81–103. New York: Simon & Schuster, 1978.

*K72b* "1974." In *The Nantucket Diary of Ned Rorem: 1973–1985*, 52–122. San Francisco: North Point Press, 1987.

The entry of 17 Feb. 1974 incorporates [K72](#). Later entries (19 Aug. 1979 and 17 June 1984) also mention Sontag.

K73 Goldstein, Richard. Artbreaks ("The Kingdom of the Ill: Susan Sontag Speaks"). *Village Voice*, 24 Oct. 1977, 47.

K74 Ellmann, Richard. Letters ("Richard Ellmann Replies"). *New York Review of Books*, 27 Oct. 1977, 43.

Cites Proust to clarify the criticism of Wilde (or of "aestheticism") that Sontag found objectionable in [G49](#).

K75 Solotaroff, Ted. Introduction to *The Best American Short Stories 1978*, edited by Ted Solotaroff and Shannon Ravenel, xiii–xxx. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1978.

Adduces "Unguided Tour."

K76 Copeland, Roger. "Photography and the World's Body." *Massachusetts Review* 19 (Winter 1978):797–807.

- K76a "Photography and the World's Body." In *Photography: Current Perspectives*, edited by Jerome Liebling, 169–79. Rochester, NY: Light Impressions Corp., 1978.
- K77 Trachtenberg, Alan. "Camera Work: Notes Toward an Investigation." *Massachusetts Review* 19 (Winter 1978):834–58.  
Credits [A12](#) for emphasizing "the social fact" of photography.
- K77a "Camera Work: Notes Toward an Investigation." In *Photography: Current Perspectives*, edited by Jerome Liebling, 206–30. Rochester, NY: Light Impressions Corp., 1978.
- K78 Willis, Ellen. "The Cancer Ward." *Rolling Stone*, 26 Jan. 1978, 27.  
Reports Sontag's "Illness as Metaphor" lecture at NYU.
- K79 Silvers, Robert B. To the Editor ("On Photography"). *TLS*, 21 Apr. 1978, 444.  
A letter accusing Elliott ([J192](#)) of misrepresenting [A12](#).
- K80 Elliott, George P. To the Editor ("On Photography"). *TLS*, 28 Apr. 1978, 475.  
Replies to [K79](#).
- K81 Wieseltier, Leon. To the Editor ("On Photography"). *TLS*, 16 June 1978, 672.  
Critiques Elliott ([J192](#)) for inventing his adversary.
- K82 Litz, A.Walton. "Literary Criticism." In *Harvard Guide to Contemporary American Writing*, edited by Daniel Hoffman, 51–83. Cambridge: Harvard Univ. Press, Belknap Press, 1979.  
Takes the mid-1960s work of J.Hillis Miller, Geoffrey Hartman, and Sontag as summarizing the shift from "practical" to "theoretical" criticism initiated by Northrop Frye.
- K83 Rich, B.Ruby. "Leni Riefenstahl: The Deceptive Myth." In *Sexual Stratagems: The World of Women in Film*, edited by Patricia Erens, 202–9. New York: Horizon Press, 1979.
- K84 Webster, Grant. *The Republic of Letters: A History of Postwar American Literary Opinion*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Univ. Press, 1979.  
Concludes with two chapters discussing "New York Intellectuals" (as being "The Bourgeois Avant-Garde").
- K85 Britton, Andrew. "For Interpretation—Notes Against Camp." *Gay Left* (London) No. 7 (Winter 1978–79):11–4.
- K86 Morris, Wright. "Photographs, Images, and Words." *American Scholar* 48 (Autumn 1979):457–69.
- K87 York, Peter. "Sontag Times." *Harpers and Queen* (London), Mar. 1979, 139, 141.

K87a "Sontag Times." In *Style Wars*, 231–5. London: Sidgwick & Jackson, 1980.

K88 Haig, Suzanne. Women in Revolt ("Margaret Thatcher: A Woman But No Sister"). *Militant*, 14 Sept. 1979, 27.

Critiques [G51](#).

K89 Volker, Rittner. "Krankheit, Literatur und Wissenschaft." *Akzente* (Munich) 26 (Oct. 1979):523–34.

Argues, contra [A13](#), that illness is increasingly self- and culturally inflicted in ways beyond science's grasp.

K90 Burzyński, Roman. "Marzyc o Susan." *Foto* (Warsaw) No. 9–10 (1980): 278–9.

Responds to [A12](#) by "dreaming" Poland too had a writer who could discuss photography sans photo-partisan prejudice.

K91 Stern, J.P., and Doris Sommer. "Syberberg's 'Hitler.'" *New York Review of Books*, 29 May 1980, 47–9.

Two letters to the editors in response to [D25](#).

*Stern*: Suggests that Sontag, in failing to distinguish an aesthetic of "mourning" from a more overtly political "fascination" with "destruction and the love of death," has "failed to make clear" what Syberberg's film "is really about" and therefore fails to perceive its dangerous "onesidedness."

*Sommer*: Accuses Sontag of failing to see the intellectual and moral "cheapness" of Syberberg's filmmaking. See [G56](#).

K92 Hollander, Paul. *Political Pilgrims: Travels of Western Intellectuals to the Soviet Union, China, and Cuba 1928–1978*. New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 1981.

Adduces [B38](#) and [A4](#).

K92a *Political Pilgrims: Travels of Western Intellectuals to the Soviet Union, China, and Cuba 1928–1978*. New York: Harper Colophon Books, 1983.

K92b *Political Pilgrims: Travels of Western Intellectuals to the Soviet Union, China, and Cuba 1928–1978*. Lanham: University Press of America, 1990.

K93 Scobie, Stephen. "Against Interpretation No. 1." In *The Pirates of Pen's Chance: Homolinguistic Translations*, by Douglas Barbour and Stephen Scobie, 60, 151. Toronto: Couch House Press, 1981.

"Translates" via "erasure" the first page of the [A2c](#) text of [B15](#); words remaining appear in their original position.

K94 Scobie, Stephen. "Against Interpretation No. 2." In *The Pirates of Pen's Chance: Homolinguistic Translations*, by Douglas Barbour and Stephen Scobie, 64, 151–2. Toronto: Couch House Press, 1981.

Selects words (per [K93](#)) entirely from the left-most margin.

K95 Coles, Robert. "Dorothea Lange and the Politics of Photography." *Raritan* 1.2 (Fall 1981):19–53.

K96 Sch. [Schaeffer, Maxi.] "Und ihr Wort frißt um sich wie der Krebs' oder gegen die Symboldeutung von Krankheiten." *Medizinische Klinik* 76.4 (13 Feb. 1981):7/85.

Summarizes [A13a](#); questions whether avoiding disease metaphors is a sufficient response to the fact of mortality.

K97 Karmel, Pepe. "Philosophers on Photography." *New Boston Review*, July–Aug. 1981, 33–4.

Compares Cavell to Barthes as theorizing the skeptical provenance of photography, as imaginatively documenting (hence negating) the very alienation that modernists like Sontag and Benjamin expect photography to overcome.

K98 Bullock, Alan. "Pirandello in Florence 1980–1." *Bulletin of the Society for Italian Studies* No. 14 (Nov. 1981):4–9.

Critiques Sontag's staging of *Come tu mi vuoi*.

K99 Wayne, Joyce. "Canada Hosts Amnesty International Congress: Writers Confront Consequences of Speaking Out." *Quille and Quire* (Toronto), Nov. 1981, 14.

Reports on the Toronto Congress (see [G69](#), [G72](#)).

K100 Acker, Kathy. *Great Expectations*. San Francisco: Re/Search, 1982.

Sontag is one of many ghostwriters invoked: "Would you please read my books and make me famous?"

*K100a*                      *Great Expectations*. New York: Grove Press, 1983.

K101 Podhoretz, Norman. "Why We Stayed In." In *Why We Were in Vietnam*, 64–132, 216–23. New York: Simon & Schuster, 1982.

Faults *Trip to Hanoi* for failing to appreciate the Stalinist strain of the official North Vietnamese culture (see pp. 90–6).

K102 Elsaesser, Thomas. "Myth as the Phantasmagoria of History: H. J. Syberberg, Cinema and Representation." *New German Critique* No. 24–25 (Fall-Winter 1981–82):108–54.

K103 Phillips, William. "Neo-History." *Partisan Review* 49 (Summer 1982): 327–31.

Cites coverage and criticism (see [K104](#)) of Sontag's "Town Hall" address as instancing a neo-historical revisionism.

K104 Wieseltier, Leon. "Ideas in Season." *Partisan Review* 49 (Summer 1982):420–8.

Praises Sontag's [B67c](#) "demurrals" from doctrinaire leftism, while avowing that her terms remain doctrinaire. See [K147](#), [K149](#).

K105 Cockburn, Alexander, and James Ridgeway. Annals of the Age of Reagan ("The Poles, the Left, and the Tumbrils of '84"). *Village Voice*, 10–16 Feb. 1982, 10, 28–9, 95.

K106 "A Born Again Cold Warrior." *Militant*, 19 Feb. 1982, 18.

K107 Haig, Suzanne. "Debate Takes Place at Poland Rally: Writer Susan Sontag Declares 'Communism Is Fascism.'" *Militant*, 19 Feb. 1982, 7.

K108 Trinkl, John, and Lisa DiCaprio. "Poland's Solidarity: U.S. Support Rally." *Guardian* (New York), 24 Feb. 1982, 11.

K109 Green, Philip, et al. "Comments." *Nation*, 27 Feb. 1982, 231–7.

As these responses to Sontag's "Town Hall" address share a single title, author names function as subheads.

*Philip Green*: Admits that Sontag's attack on the "double standard" of the left is "partially reasonable," but insists that she errs in equating fascism and communism, on the grounds that communism's ideal of "democratic socialism" has generated real revolutions, provoked by the betrayal of those ideals by "ruling elites," whereas fascism has no ideals that *can* be betrayed.

*Diana Trilling*: Laments it "still constitutes an act of moral courage to see and admit the obvious." Ponders Sontag's own (Stalinist) willingness to brand the opposition as "fascist." Disagrees with the leftist cant that attacks Reagan as hypocritical (rather than "dismayingly sincere"). (See [K112](#).)

*Aryeh Neier*: Shares Sontag's aversion to "mainstream Anti-Communism"; applauds her critique of communist practices.

*Daniel Singer*: Distinguishes between "Sontag the writer and critic" and "the strange" speaker who appeared in Town Hall; takes Sontag as having "assimilated the peculiar logic of Parisian turncoats" that declares a "cheap, fashionable equation between Marx and the barbed wire" of the gulag.

*Andrew Kopkind*: Recalls his time with Sontag in Hanoi (see [A4](#)) as prologue to declaring that Sontag has "forgotten that politics is history, not philosophy."

*David Hollinger*: Takes Sontag's concluding plea for left intellectuals to "tell the truth" as outdated, especially by contrast with the work of political historians who have elaborated the relationship of communism and fascism.

*Philip Pochoda*: Takes Sontag's aphoristic declaration that "Communism... is fascism with a human face" as a "barbarous assault on valid historical discrimination."

*Christopher Hitchens*: Praises Sontag's effort "to open debate on the responsibilities of the left" while contending she "has done her best to close it again by ill-tempered and ahistorical remarks about fascism." See [G67](#).

*K109a* "Polémica sobre el socialismo real." *Vuelta* (Mexico, D.F.) 6, 70 (Sept. 1982):46–8.  
A Spanish translation of [K109](#).

K110 "Susan Sontag Provokes Debate on Communism." *New York Times*, 27 Feb. 1982, 27.

K111 Holmberg, Arthur. "As You Desire Me." *Theatre Journal* 34 (Mar. 1982):111-2.

Describes Sontag's staging of Pirandello in detail.

K112 Schoenman, Ralph. "Susan Sontag and the Left." *Village Voice*, 2 Mar. 1982, 20, 32.

K113 Wills, Carry, et al. "Susan Sontag's God That Failed." *Soho News*, 2 Mar. 1982, 10-3, 42-3.

A headnote detailing the public response to Sontag's Town Hall address (reporting, as well, her complaint of copyright infringement) precedes additional, solicited responses.

*Carry Wills*: Questions "Sontag's powers of analysis" given her adoption of a *Reader's Digest* point of view.

*Diana Trilling*: See K109.

*Noam Chomsky*: Disputes the equation of socialism and communism; denies that martial law in Poland teaches any new lessons about the latter, except to highlight how much more repressive capitalist militarism can be.

*Nathan Glazer*: Praises Sontag's speech; ponders the utility of equating communism and fascism and the necessity of distinguishing among particular communist regimes.

*Marshall Berman*: Urges the similarity of communism and democracy (and their differences from fascism). Attributes Sontag's propensity for "off the wall" generalizations to her admiration for intellectual danger and her distress with modern life and a yearning for (radical) disburdenment or forgetting.

*Mary McCarthy*: Praises Sontag "for sticking her neck out."

*Seymour Martin Lipset*: Takes Sontag as symptomatic of leftist intellectuals generally in that her renunciation of the double standard evidences the existence of one. Urges, against leftist utopianism, that "the ideal is the enemy of the good."

*James Weinstein*: Argues "that communism is failed socialism and that fascism is failed capitalism."

*Jessica Mitford*: Vigorously denies the equation of communism and fascism, with communism in its American and Western European variants earning high praise.

*Bernard-Henri Levy*: Praises Sontag's better-late-than-never discovery of the fascism in communism, while taking the latter to be the deadlier, for being more "theological," variant.

*Michel Foucault*: Denies that Poland and El Salvador are comparable.

*Edward W.Said*: Critiques Sontag's failure to extend her analysis to include other oppressions, e.g., of the Palestinians.

*Julia Kristeva*: Urges the necessity of supporting Sontag's antidogmatic position in view of the "backward Marxism" of American intellectuals.

*Ben J. Wattenberg*: Commends Sontag's stance on communism, but wonders how painful her retrospection might prove given her earlier writings on China, Cuba, and Vietnam.

*Félix Guattari*: Urges (contra Lévy) that opposition to Sovietism does not require approval of capitalism.

*Alan Wolfe*: Describes Sontag as "naïve" about socialism, about the double standard of double standards, about truth's relationships to power, while praising her "moral fervor."

K114 Buckley, William F., Jr. "Sontag Sees Red—Clearly." *Washington Post*, 5 Mar. 1982, [A27](#).

K115 This Week ("Out of the Fever Swamp"). *National Review*, 5 Mar. 1982, 205–13.

Reports (pp. 211–3) Sontag's Town Hall address.

K116 Kitchens, Christopher. "Poland and the US Left." *Spectator*, 6 Mar. 1982, 13.

K116a "New York's Left: a 'Moment of Truth'?" *Encounter*, May 1982, 82.

Reprints the Sontag-related portion of [K116](#).

K117 Timerman, Jacobo. "Moral Symmetry." Trans. (Eng.) David Fishlow. *Nation*, 6 Mar. 1982, 261–2.

Avows that opposition to communism and fascism does not require equating them.

K118 Schoenman, Ralph. Letters ("Supporting Solidarity"). *Nation*, 13 Mar. 1982, 290.

K119 "Setting the Record Straight." *Nation*, 13 Mar. 1982, 292–3.

Discusses the publication circumstances of [B67c](#) and samples the *Reader's Digest's* coverage of communism.

K120 Trilling, Diana. Letters ("The Company She Keeps"). *Nation*, 13 Mar. 1982, 290.

K121 Weatherby, W.J. "Chiding with Sontag." *Guardian* (Manchester), 13 Mar. 1982, 19.

K122 "Seeing Red: Sontag Shakes up the Left." *Time*, 15 Mar. 1982, 19.

K123 Hentoff, Nat. "The Authorized Sontag v. That 'Dreadful' Soho Rag." *Village Voice*, 16 Mar. 1982, 4.

Criticizes Sontag's suit against the *Soho News* as "an attack on the free exchange of ideas." (See also [K134](#).)

K124 Lardner, James. "Susan Sontag into the Fray: The Rift after Attacking Communism." *Washington Post*, 16 Mar. 1982, [C1](#), [C9](#).

K125 Hoffman, Abbie, et al. Letters. *Nation*, 27 Mar. 1982, 354, 368–70.

Comprises fourteen (variously titled) responses to Sontag's Town Hall talk; among the letter writers is Joseph Brodsky.

K126 “Fascism as Metaphor: Rip Van Sontag and Other Sleepyheads.” *Inquiry*, 29 Mar. 1982, 3–4.

K127 Puddington, Arch. “The Polish Example: Communism’s Ongoing War Against Humanity.” *American Spectator*, Apr. 1982, 8–12.

K128 Cockburn, Alexander. Press Clips (“The Sontag Saga”). *Village Voice*, 6 Apr. 1982, 10–1, 18.

K129 Hentoff, Nat. “First Amendment Jane/and the Unauthorized Fonda.” *Village Voice*, 13 Apr. 1982, 4.

Attacks Jane Fonda; refers in closing to Sontag. See [K134](#).

K130 Mano, D.Keith. The Gimlet Eye (“The Strange Agony of Susan Sontag”). *National Review*, 16 Apr. 1982, 439–40.

K131 Neier, Aryeh. “Dissenting Opinion.” *Nation*, 8 May 1982, 547–8.

Defends Sontag against Hentoff’s [K129](#) criticism.

K132 Anders, Jaroslaw, Joseph Brodsky, and Richard Grenier. Correspondence (“Sontag Slugfest”). *New Republic*, 26 May 1982, 6–7, 39.

Brodsky and Anders reply to [H103](#); Grenier replies in turn.

*Brodsky*: Claims that Sontag’s primary subject is “the philosophy of perception,” that she has evolved from an aesthetic to an ethical view of the matter, which ethic Grenier “profanes” in reducing her views to the realm of politics.

*Anders*: Reports Sontag had agreed that “communism is successful fascism,” in Poland, long before her Town Hall speech; disputes Grenier’s report of Sontag’s dispute with Brodsky over metaphysical poetry.

*Grenier*: Renews the claim that Sontag exhibits “passionate contempt for American society” by adducing table-talk remarks about North Korean socialism.

K133 Goodman, Walter. “Hard to Digest.” *Harper’s*, June 1982, 64–8.

Confirms Sontag’s [B67a](#) claim regarding *Reader’s Digest*.

K134 Hentoff, Nat. “Celebrity Censorship.” *Inquiry*, June 1982, 8–10.

Recapitulates [K123](#) and [K129](#).

K135 Lipset, Seymour Martin. “The Thugs and Susan Sontag.” *American Spectator*, June 1982, 30–2.

K136 Kitchens, Christopher. “Party Talk.” *Observer* (London), 20 June 1982, 27.

K137 Salutin, Rick. The Culture Vulture (“Sontag in Canada”). *This Magazine* (Toronto), July 1982, 22–4.

Discusses the “Cold War” aspect of the “Writer and Human Rights” conference (see [G69](#), [G72](#)) in light of [B67a](#).

K138 Tirman, Joh. “Illness Is No Metaphor: Reflections on a Close Call.” *Village Voice*, 24 Aug. 1982, 14, 16, 18–9.

K139 McEvelley, Thomas. “Heads It’s Form, Tails It’s Not Content.” *Artforum* 21.3 (Nov. 1982):50–61.

Critiques “pure form” (per [B15](#)) as “naturalizing culture.”

K139a “Heads It’s Form, Tails It’s Not Content.” In *Looking Critically: 21 Years of Artforum Magazine*, edited by Amy Baker Sandback, 256–63. Ann Arbor: UMI Research Press, 1984.

K140 Silvers, Robert, and Melvin J. Lasky. Letters (“Sontag in Poland”). *Encounter*, Nov. 1982, 94–5.

Silvers disputes Lasky’s implication (in the Aug. 1982 number) that Sontag had ever approved of Poland’s communist regimes. Lasky replies to Silver and to Sontag (see G68).

K141 Cameron, Eleanor. “Art and Morality.” In *Festschrift: A Ten Year Retrospective*, edited by Perry Nodelman and Jill P. May, 28–35. West Lafayette, IN: Children’s Literature Association, 1983.

Adduces the similarity of John Gardner and Sontag—in that each sees art morality as process, not statement—in framing the opposition of the aesthetic and the ethical in young adult fiction. (Originally appeared in the 1980 CLA *Proceedings*.)

K142 Danto, Arthur. “The Appreciation and Interpretation of Works of Art.” In *Relativism in the Arts*, edited by Betty Jeane Craige, 21–44. Athens: Univ. of Georgia Press, 1983.

Claims interpretation “constitutes” the artwork. Takes B15 as attacking (instancing) “explanatory” interpretation of the kind that “address[es] the work in the spirit of science” and thus renders the question of aesthetic interpretation moot.

K142a “The Appreciation and Interpretation of Works of Art.” In *The Philosophical Disenfranchisement of Art*, 23–46. New York: Columbia Univ. Press, 1986.

K143 Hollander, Paul. “Society and Intellectuals: The Persistence of Estrangement and Wishful Thinking.” In *The Many Faces of Socialism: Comparative Sociology and Politics*, 323–43. New Brunswick: Transaction Books, 1983.

K144 Phillips, William. “The Sixties.” In *A Partisan View: Five Decades of the Literary Life*, 251–7. New York: Stein & Day, 1983.

Discusses the publication of B11; revisits H16.

K145 Brooks, Cleanth. “The Primacy of the Reader.” *Missouri Review* 6.2 (Winter 1983):189–201.

Critiques B15 as “the most extreme form of reader-oriented criticism” in urging critics “simply [to] leave the reader alone.”

K145a “The Primacy of the Reader.” In *The Rich Manifold: The Author, the Reader, the Linguistic Medium*, The Paul Anthony Brick Lecture Series, edited by Joseph M. Ditta and Ronald

S.Librach, 41–53. Columbia, Missouri: *The Missouri Review*, 1983.

K146 Robbins, Bruce. “Feeling Global: John Berger and Experience.” *Boundary 2* 11.1–2 (Fall 1982-Winter 1983):291–308.

Contrasts Berger’s practice of narrativizing photographs with Sontag’s less sanguine belief that the photograph’s “plurality of meanings” condemns photography to reproducing modernity.

K146a “Feeling Global: John Berger and Experience.” In *Postmodernism and Politics*, edited by Jonathan Arac, 145–61. Minneapolis: Univ. of Minnesota Press, 1986.

K147 Rieff, David. Letter to the Editor. *Partisan Review* 50 (Spring 1983):313–8.

Critiques K104. Grants that the B67 equation of communism and fascism is “debatable,” while scoring Wieseltier’s limited view of the political and of intellectuals.

K148 Sayre, Henry M. “The Object of Performance: Aesthetics in the Seventies.” *Georgia Review* 37 (Spring 1983):169–88.

Sees “performance art” as shifting “presence” from “object to audience”; links Sontag’s “photography” with Derrida’s “trace” as urging a potentially subversive “intertextuality.”

K149 Wieseltier, Leon. “Leon Wieseltier Replies.” *Partisan Review* 50 (Spring 1983):318–9.

Replies to K147.

K150 Kopkind, Andrew. “The Return of Cold War Liberalism.” *Nation*, 23 Apr. 1983, Front Cover, 503–12.

K151 Salutin, Rick. The Culture Vulture (“Once More Sontag”). *This Magazine* (Toronto), June 1983, 22–4.

K152 Goldstein, Richard. “Heartsick: Fear and Loving in the Gay Community.” *Village Voice*, 28 June, 1983, 9–12.

Discusses AIDS by reference to A13.

K153 Cockburn, Alexander. Press Clips (“Forever Susan”). *Village Voice*, 11 Oct. 1983, 20–1.

Quotes K151 at length.

K154 Bronski, Michael. “The Making of Gay Sensibility.” In *Culture Clash: The Making of Gay Sensibility*, 1–88, 216–22. Boston: South End Press, 1984.

Disputes B11.

K155 Sayres, Sohnya. Introduction to “Part 2: Reading for What?” In *The 60s without Apology*, edited by Sohnya Sayres et al., 217–21. Minneapolis: Univ. of Minnesota Press, 1984. (Corresponds to *Social Text* 3.3–4.1 [Spring-Summer 1984].)

Ponders the 1960s via Goodman, Mailer, and Sontag.

K156 Woods, Alan. "Death and the Instamatic." *Cambridge Quarterly* 13 (1984):147–63.

K157 Biuso, Thomas N. "Looking into Blasket Island Photographs." *Éire-Ireland* 19.4 (Winter 1984):16–34.

K158 Boyd, David. "Persona and the Cinema of Interpretation." *Film Quarterly* 37.2 (Winter 1983–84):10–9.

Elaborates Schor's [H79](#) critique of [B15](#).

*K158a* "Images Beyond Interpretation: *Persona*" In *Film and the Interpretive Process: A Study of Blow-Up, Rashomon, Citizen Kane, 8½, Vertigo and Persona*, 171–94, 229–30. New York: Peter Lang Publishing, 1989.

Reprints the *Persona* portion of [K158](#), expanded.

*K158b* Introduction to *Film and the Interpretive Process: A Study of Blow-Up, Rashomon, Citizen Kane, 8½, Vertigo and Persona*, 1–17, 215–6. New York: Peter Lang Publishing, 1989.

Expands and revises the first ten paragraphs of [K158](#).

K159 Donnell-Kotrozo, Carol. "Material Illusion." *Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* 42 (Spring 1984):277–82.

Adduces [A12](#) and [B15](#) in linking the retreat from reality via surrogates to the avoidance of interpretation via mimicry.

K160 Huyssen, Andreas. "Mapping the Postmodern." *New German Critique* 33 (Fall 1984):5–52.

Counters the claim that America has "domesticated" post-structuralism by comparing Sontag and Barthes.

*K160a* "Mapping the Postmodern." In *After the Great Divide: Modernism, Mass Culture, Postmodernism*, 178–221, 235–40. Bloomington: Indiana Univ. Press, 1986.

*K160b* "Mapping the Postmodern." In *Feminism/Postmodernism*, edited by Linda J. Nicholson, 234–77. New York: Routledge, 1990.

K161 Showalter, Elaine. "Women Who Write Are Women." *New York Times Book Review*, 16 Dec. 1984, 1, 31, 33.

K162 Simon, John. "The Light That Never Failed." *New York*, 24–31 Dec. 1984, 46–7.

Praises Sontag as a model of intellectual "many-sidedness."

K163 Grabes, Herbert. "Good Guides or Bad: Which Modes of Interpretation for Whom?" *Amerikastudien* (Stuttgart) 30 (1985): 7–13.

K164 Manske, Eva. "Weltsicht und Erzählstrukturen im postmodernistischen Roman der USA in den sechziger und siebziger Jahren: Ästhetische

Konzeptionen und Programme und literarische Praxis." *Weimarer Beiträge* (Berlin) 31 (1985):393–413.

Sontag's "new sensibility" is discussed at some length as a unifying formulation of postmodern American fiction.

K165 Oleneva, Valentina I. "Novelly i fragmenty (J.Barth, D. Barthelme, J.P.Donleavy, T.Pynchon)." In *Modernistskaya novella SSHA. 60–70–e gody*, 86–245. Kiev: Naukova Dumka, 1985.

A14 is given short overview shrift as instancing the "dead end" of "modernist pretensions." (See pp. 225–9.)

K166 White, Edmund. *Caracole*. New York: E.P.Dutton; Toronto: Fitzhenry & Whiteside, 1985.

Recalls A1 in its moebius-strip narration, its generically decadent "European" setting, its cast of outcast and overcast intellectuals, with the intertextual *roman à clef* attraction of featuring Sontag in what amounts to the Frau Anders role, as "Mathilde"—a famous intellectual inclined "to play the aesthete among moralists and the moralist among aesthetes."

\*K166a *Caracole*. London: Pan, 1986.

K166b *Caracole*. New York: Plume, NAL; Scarborough, Ont.: New American Library of Canada, 1986.

K167 Jones, K. "The Metaphysics of the Photograph." *British Journal of Aesthetics* 25 (Autumn 1985):372–9.

K168 Spurr, David. "Colonialist Journalism: Stanley to Didion." *Raritan* 5.2 (Fall 1985):35–50.

Takes colonialist discourse as establishing a difference of colonizer from colonized while also seeking to dominate by "inclusion or domestication." Discusses A4.

K169 Rich, Frank. "Stage: Milan Kundera's 'Jacques and His Master.'" *New York Times*, 23 Jan. 1985, C19.

Reviews Sontag's staging of Kundera's play.

K170 Kroll, Jack. "Whose Life Is It, Anyway?" *Newsweek*, 4 Feb. 1985, 51.

Reviews Sontag's staging of *Jacques and His Master*.

K171 Gallop, Jane. "The Pleasure of the Phototext." *Afterimage* 12.9 (Apr. 1985):16–8.

Ponders distinctions between nature and art, pornography and eroticism, via Barthes's *Camera Lucida* and A12.

K171a "Carnal Knowledge." In *Thinking through the Body*, 135–78. New York: Columbia Univ. Press, 1988.

A slightly revised K171 (see pp. 149–60).

K172 Atlas, James. "The Changing World of New York Intellectuals." *New York Times Magazine*, 25 Aug. 1985, 22–5, 52–3, 70–1, 73, 76.

K173 Laing, Jeffrey M. "John Hawkes's Aesthetics: The William Gass-Susan Sontag Connection." *Notes on Contemporary Literature* 15.5 (Nov. 1985):9.

Likens the artifice of Hawkes's fictions to Gass's theory of language, its dislocatedness to Sontag's view of photography.

K174 Arcand, Denys. *Le déclin de l'empire américain*, Feature Film, Color, 101 minutes. Writer and Director: Denys Arcand, Producers: René Malo and Roger Frappier. With: Dominique Michel (Dominique St. Arnaud), Dorothee Berryman (Louise), Louise Portal (Diane), Pierre Curzi (Pierre), Rémy Girard (Rémy), Yves Jacques (Claude), Geneviève Rioux (Danielle), Daniel Brière (Alain), Gabriel Arcand (Mario). Corporation Image M & M, L'Office national du film du Canada, Cineplex Odeon, 1986.

The film's central figure is the female chair of a Canadian history department, for whom history is a matter of inevitable decline. An erotomane colleague jokes he'd be happier with four wives, "as the Koran says"—his wife of twenty years, an Olympic high jumper, a sex maniac, and "a writer, say, Susan Sontag." To judge by the chair's subsequent comments on the relations of power and gender, he is not merely joking.

K175 Bertens, Hans. "The Postmodern *Weltanschauung* and Its Relation with Modernism: An Introductory Survey." In *Approaching Postmodernism: Papers Presented at a Workshop on Postmodernism, 21–23 September 1984, University of Utrecht*, edited by Douwe Fokkema and Hans Bertens, 9–51. Amsterdam: John Benjamins Publishing Co., 1986.

K175a "The Postmodern *Weltanschauung* and Its Relation to Modernism: An Introductory Survey." In *A Postmodern Reader*, edited by Joseph Natoli and Linda Hutcheon, 25–69. Albany: State Univ. of New York Press, 1993.

K176 Frankenberg, Ronald. "Sickness as Cultural Performance: Drama, Trajectory, and Pilgrimage Root Metaphors and the Making Social of Disease." *International Journal of Health Services* 16 (1986):603–26.

K177 Kappeler, Susanne. "Art and Pornography." In *The Pornography of Representation*, 82–100, 229–30. Cambridge, UK: Polity Press, 1986.

K177a "Art and Pornography." In *The Pornography of Representation*, 82–100, 229–30. Minneapolis: Univ. of Minnesota Press; Markham, Ont.: Fitzhenry & Whiteside, 1986.

K178 McRobbie, Angela. "Postmodernism and Popular Culture." In *Postmodernism*, ICA Documents 4–5, edited by Lisa Appignanesi, 54–8. London: Institute of Contemporary Arts, 1986.

Adduces B11 (contra Jameson) as modeling an active countercultural aesthetic.

K179 Roger, Philippe. "La spirale des 'grand mots.'" In *Roland Barthes, roman*, 49–69. Paris: Bernard Grasset, 1986.

Disputes the association of Barthes with Camp by reference to Barthes's own rejection of dandyism. (See pp. 60–2.)

K180 Suleiman, Susan Rubin. "Pornography, Transgression, and the Avant-Garde: Bataille's *Story of the Eye*." In *The Poetics of Gender*, edited by Nancy K. Miller, 117–36. New York: Columbia Univ. Press, 1986.

Contrasts Dworkin and Sontag (B30) on Bataille as prologue to suggesting that "Bataille's texts themselves" are insightful critiques of the Oedipal sources of fiction and fantasy.

K180a "Transgression and the Avant-Garde: Bataille's *Histoire de l'oeil*." In *Subversive Intent: Gender, Politics, and the Avant-Garde*, 72–87, 221–6. Cambridge: Harvard Univ. Press, 1990.

K181 McHoul, Alec, and David Wills. "The Late(r) Barthes: Constituting Fragmenting Subjects." *Boundary 2* 14.1–2 (Fall 1985-Winter 1986):261–78.

Takes D28 as recuperating Barthes for a subjectivist aesthetics.

K182 Kipnis, Laura. "Aesthetics and Foreign Policy." *Social Text* No. 15 (Fall 1986):89–98.

Adduces B15, B38, and B67c as instancing "an unfettered subjectivity that utilizes aesthetics as a [receptacle] for every racist, classist, and imperialist received idea."

K182a "Aesthetics and Foreign Policy." In *Ecstasy Unlimited: On Sex, Capital, Gender, and Aesthetics*, 207–17, 298–9. Minneapolis: Univ. of Minnesota Press, 1993.

K183 Koenig, Rhoda. "At Play in the Fields of the Word: Alienation, Imagination, Feminism and Foolishness at PEN." *New York*, 3 Feb. 1986, 40–7.

K184 McGowan, William. "Selling Out with a Smirk: Lessons from David Letterman, Susan Sontag and David Byrne." *Washington Monthly*, Mar. 1986, 38–41.

K185 Lotozo, Eileen. "Rediscovery: Autobiography of Ardor." *Belles Lettres* 1.4 (Mar.–Apr. 1986):5.

Reviews *Marina Tsvetaeva, A Captive Spirit*. See D29.

K186 Rieff, David. "El Gulag." *New Republic*, 28 July 1986, 36–40.

Reviews *Against All Hope: The Prison Memoirs of Armando Valladares*, though the story Rieff tells, of an aesthetic/erotic commitment to Cuba and its revolution succeeded by self-criticism, includes Sontag as a character.

K187 Allen, Woody. *Three Films of Woody Allen: Zelig, Broadway Danny Rose, The Purple Rose of Cairo*. New York: Vintage Books, 1987.

Sontag's part in *Zelig* (pp. 3–4, 97) is annotated at [E20](#).

K188 Carroll, Noël. "Concerning Uniqueness Claims for Photographic and Cinematographic Representation." *Dialectics and Humanism* No. 2 (1987):29–43.

Counters the "re-presentationalist" claim that photographs automatically reproduce their subjects by reference to Sontag.

K189 Kratzert, Armin. Untitled postscript. In *Camp: Nijinsky, Hitler, Sexfilme, Rosenkavalier, Jugendstillampen, David Bowie, Caravaggio, De Gaule, Greta Garbo, Jesus, Oscar Wilde, Rokokokirchen—und mehr!*, edited by Armin Kratzert. Munich: Popa Verlag, 1987. See [A19](#).

Observes the difficulty of defining "camp," especially in the German context. Praises Sontag's confrontation with the orthodox view of art as the good, the beautiful, the true.

K190 Rieff, David. *Going to Miami: Exiles, Tourists, and Refugees in the New America*. Boston: Little, Brown & Co., 1987.

Sontag's son recounts his journeys back and forth from New York to Miami, from "Anglo-American" culture to the "preCastro" culture of the Cuban diaspora. Refers to his mother, to her asthma-inspired sojourn in Miami Beach circa 1939, to his own latchkey childhood on New York's West Side, etc.

\*K190a *Going to Miami: Exiles, Tourists, and Refugees in the New America*. London: Bloomsbury, 1987.

\*K190b *Camino de Miami*. Madrid: El Pais, Aguilar, 1988.

\*K190c *Going to Miami: Exiles, Tourists, and Refugees in the New America*. New York: Penguin, 1988.

K191 Wald, Alan M. "The Bitter Fruits of Anticommunism." In *The New York Intellectuals: The Rise and Decline of the Anti-Stalinist Left from the 1930s to the 1980s*, 344–65. Chapel Hill: Univ. of North Carolina Press, 1987.

K192 Gubar, Susan. "Representing Pornography: Feminism, Criticism, and Depictions of Female Violation." *Critical Inquiry* 13 (Summer 1987):712–41.

Critiques anti-porn and civil-liberty feminists; cites [B30](#).

K192a "Representing Pornography: Feminism, Criticism, and Depictions of Female Violation." In *For Adult Users Only: The Dilemma of Violent Pornography*, edited by Susan Gubar and Joan Hoff, 46–67. Bloomington: Indiana Univ. Press, 1989.

K193 Klein, Judith. "Trois écrivains devant Simone Weil: Ria Endres, Susan Sontag et Ingeborg Bachmann." *Cahiers Simone Weil* (Paris) 10.3 (Sept. 1987): 303–7.

Criticizes Sontag for subjecting Weil's ideas to a "psychological reduction."

K194 Boyers, Robert. "Feminism and Film." In *After the Avant-Garde*, 174–89. University Park: Pennsylvania State Univ. Press, 1988.

Pairs Sontag's criticism with Jameson's—in language added to the 1976 *Partisan Review* original—as emphasizing ideas and works that exhibit "resistance to easy encapsulation."

K195 Caute, David. "Night Flight to Hanoi." In *The Fellow-Travellers: Intellectual Friends of Communism*, rev. ed., 391–404. New Haven, CT: Yale Univ. Press, 1988.

Discusses Sontag and Mary McCarthy. (Though *Fellow-Travellers* first appeared in 1973, K195 only appears here.)

K196 Caute, David. *Sixty-Eight: The Year of the Barricades*. London: Hamish Hamilton, 1988.

A history of the New Left; Sontag appears repeatedly.

K196a *The Year of the Barricades: A Journey through 1968*. New York: Harper & Row, 1988.

K197 Grönberg, Staffan, and Bo Heurling. "Brother Carl." In *Svensk filmografi*, Vol. 7, 1970–1979, edited by Lars Åhlander, 116–8. Stockholm: Filminstitutet, 1988.

Summarizes the plot of E5 and the overwhelmingly negative reaction of the Swedish critical establishment.

K198 Grossman, Judith. *In Her Own Terms*. New York: Soho Press, 1988.

"Sontag" is mentioned, though her "brightest woman in existence" character never appears. See pp. 221–3 and 232.

K199 Leitch, Vincent B. *American Literary Criticism from the Thirties to the Eighties*. New York: Columbia Univ. Press, 1988.

Two chapters address Sontag's work directly, if briefly.

"Phenomenological and Existential Criticism." Discussions of B28 (the "definitive formulation" of "the ordeal" of modern consciousness) and B15 (in which Sontag's phenomenological "revulsion against interpretation" revealed "Rebellion rather than silence" as her "most authentic option") show Sontag as "a useful transitional figure" for the shift from phenomenology to hermeneutics. (See pp. 166–72.)

"Hermeneutics." Describes the scope-expanding shift from B15 to B28 as a move "from phenomenology to existentialism." (See pp. 188–97.)

K200 Naremore, James. "Marlene Dietrich in *Morocco* (1930)." *Acting in the Cinema*, 131–56. Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 1988.

Explores Dietrich's camp theatricality per B11.

K201 Nieraad, Jürgen. "Du sollst nicht deuten: Neo-Avantgarde, Dekonstruktivismus und Interpretation im Rückblick." *Poetica* (Amsterdam) 20 (1988):131–55.

K202 Sayre, Henry M. "The Avant-Garde and Experimental Writing." In *The Columbia Literary History of the United States*, edited by Emory Elliott, 1178–99. New York: Columbia Univ. Press, 1988.

Takes Sontag as epitomizing the trend away from formalist "objectivity" in the name of phenomenological immediacy.

K203 Shelton, Ron. *Bull Durham*. Feature Film, Color, 108 minutes. Writer and Director: Ron Shelton, Producers: Thom Mount and Mark Burg, Executive Producer: David V. Lester. With: Kevin Costner (Crash Davis), Susan Sarandon (Annie Savoy), Tim Robbins (Ebby Calvin "Nuke" LaLoosh). A Mount Company Production, Orion Pictures, 1988.

Prompted by a copy of [A2c](#), perused while Annie lights candles at her "church of baseball" household shrine, Crash declares, among his tendentious articles of faith, that Sontag's novels are "over-rated crap." Annie replies, days later in the batting cage, that "Sontag is brilliant."

K204 York, Lorraine M. "*The Other Side of Dailiness*": *Photography in the Works of Alice Munro, Timothy Findley, Michael Ondaatje, and Margaret Laurence*. Toronto: ECW Press, 1988.

Anticipates [I19](#) in using Sontag's comments on photography to summarize various understandings of paradox and of photography in modern Canadian fiction.

K205 Wilson, Ann. "Ideology and Criticism: Deadpan." *Canadian Theatre Review* No. 57 (Winter 1988):11–6.

Argues the situatedness of criticism by reference to [B15](#).

K206 Ross, Andrew. "Uses of Camp." *Yale Journal of Criticism* 2.1 (Fall 1988):1–24.

Scores Sontag's [B11](#) attempt to pair Camp and "Jewish moral seriousness" as instancing modernism on the grounds that Camp parodies the "seriousness" of the "responsibly situated intellectual."

*K206a* "Uses of Camp." In *No Respect: Intellectuals and Popular Culture*, 135–70, 249–53. New York: Routledge, 1989.  
Reprints [K206](#), considerably revised and expanded.

*K206b* "Uses of Camp." In *Camp Grounds: Style and Homosexuality*, edited by David Bergman, 54–77. Amherst: Univ. of Massachusetts Press, 1993.

K207 Kimball, Roger. "The Anguishes of E.M.Cioran." *New Criterion* 6.7 (Mar. 1988):37–44.

K208 Lasky, Melvin J. "The Ideas of '68: A Retrospective on the 20th Anniversary Celebrations of 'the Student Revolt.'" *Encounter*, Nov. 1988, 3–18.

K209 Boyd, David. "Images of Interpretation: *Blow-Up*." In *Film and the Interpretive Process: A Study of Blow-Up, Rashomon, Citizen Kane, 8½, Vertigo and Persona*, 19–49, 216–9. New York: Peter Lang Publishing, 1989.

Takes Sontag's A12 speculations on the (passive) aggression of photography as a key to the "epistemological dilemma" of fragmentation allegorized in Antonioni's *Blow-Up*.

K210 Friedman, Ellen G., and Miriam Fuchs. "Contexts and Continuities: An Introduction to Women's Experimental Fiction in English." In *Breaking the Sequence: Women's Experimental Fiction*, edited by Ellen G. Friedman and Miriam Fuchs, 3–51. Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 1989.

Seeks "an exemplary feminine literary discourse" across three generations. Takes B15 as opposing monological interpretation, while Sontag's fictions—in their blurring of distinctions among past and present, dream and reality—are seen as indeterminate in "yielding Logos" to "experience."

K211 Grover, Jan Zita. "Constitutional Symptoms." In *Taking Liberties: AIDS and Cultural Politics*, edited by Erica Carter and Simon Watney, 147–59. London: Serpent's Tail, 1989.

Disputes A13.

K212 Read, Daphne. "(De)Constructing Pornography: Feminisms in Conflict." In *Passion and Power: Sexuality in History*, edited by Kathy Peiss, Christina Simmons, and Robert A. Padgug, 277–92. Philadelphia: Temple Univ. Press, 1989.

K213 Shumway, David R. "Jameson/Hermeneutics/Postmodernism." In *Postmodernism/Jameson/Critique*, edited by Douglas Kellner, 172–202. Washington, DC: Maisonneuve Press, 1989.

K214 Besserman, Lawrence. "Being Sick in English: Notes on the Semantics of Illness." *American Speech* 64 (Winter 1989):368–72.

K215 Moon, Michael. "Flaming Closets." *October* No. 51 (Winter 1989):19–54.

Criticizes D14 as being, per B11, apolitical.

K216 Carter, Albert Howard, III. "Metaphors in the Physician-Patient Relationship." *Soundings* 72 (Spring 1989):153–64.

K217 Rudnick, Paul, and Kurt Andersen. "The Irony Epidemic: How Camp Changed from Lush to Lite, Why David Letterman Is a God, Our Field Guide to the Unwittingly Hip and the Fashionably Unfashionable, and an Introduction to the Tiny Conversational Art of Air Quotes." *Spy*, Mar. 1989, 93–8.

K217a "The Irony Epidemic: The Dark Side of Fiestaware and the Flintstones." *Utne Reader*, May–June 1989, 34–40.

K218 Leavitt, David. "The Way I Live Now." *New York Times Magazine*, 9 July 1989, 28–32, 80, 82–3.

Praises C12 for its "redemptive" depiction of AIDS.

K218a "The Way I Live Now." In *The Story and Its Writer: An Introduction to Short Fiction*, 3rd ed., edited by Ann Charters, 1470–1. Boston: Bedford, St. Martin's, 1991.

K219 Bates, Milton J. "Men, Women, and Vietnam." In *America Rediscovered: Critical Essays on Literature and Film of the Vietnam War*, edited by Owen W. Gilman, Jr., and Lome Smith, 27–63. New York: Garland Publishing, 1990.

Takes William Eastlake, Tim O'Brien, and Sontag (A5) as implying alike that "the survival of the human race depends on a feminization of the dominant male character type."

K220 Calhoun-French, Diane M. "On a Soapbox: *All My Children* and AIDS Education." In *Sexual Politics and Popular Culture*, edited by Diane Raymond, 112–8. Bowling Green: Bowling Green State Univ. Popular Press, 1990.

Reads an AIDS story line as confirming A20b.

K221 Cohen, Ira. "Our Ancestor Alfred Chester." In *Head of a Sad Angel: Stories 1953–1966*, by Alfred Chester, edited by Edward Field, 364–5. Santa Rosa, CA: Black Sparrow Press, 1990.

Reports that "Mary Poor Poor" in K22 "was based on Susan Sontag."

K222 Collier, Peter, and David Horowitz. "The Middle of the Journey." In *Destructive Generation: Second Thoughts about the 60s*, 307–38. New York: Summit Books, 1990.

Scores Sontag's unwillingness to reconsider the "destructive" generation's linkage of liberalism and political leftism.

K223 Dante, Joe. *Gremlins 2: The New Batch*. Feature Film, Color, 107 minutes. Director: Joe Dante, Producer: Michael Finnell, Coproducer: Rick Baker, Executive Producers: Steven Spielberg, Kathleen Kennedy, Frank Marshall, Writer: Charlie Haas. With: Zach Galligan (Billy Peltzer), Phoebe Gates (Kate Beringer), John Glover (Daniel Clamp), Robert Prosky (Grandpa Fred), Christopher Lee (Dr. Catheter). An Amblin Entertainment Picture, Warner Bros., 1990.

When the genetically altered "Brain Gremlin" is asked what gremlins want, he replies "civilization," which means "The Geneva Convention, chamber music, Susan Sontag."

K224 Demetz, Peter. "Reflections of an Emeritus (To-Be)." *Profession* (1990): 3–7.

Reviews the debate between "affirmative hermeneutics" and "deconstruction." Concludes by extended reference to B15.

K225 Field, Edward. "A Biographical Sketch." In *Head of a Sad Angel: Stories 1953–1966*, by Alfred Chester, edited by Edward Field, 303–9. Santa Rosa, CA: Black Sparrow Press, 1990.

Adduces Sontag's friendship with Chester.

K225a "Among the Tangerinos: The Life, Madness and Death of Alfred Chester." *New York Times Book Review*, 15 Sept. 1991, 15–6.

K226 Kiernan, Robert F. "The Camp Enterprise." In *Frivolity Unbound: Six Masters of the Camp Novel*, 11–8, 151–2. New York: Continuum, Frederick Ungar, 1990.

Defines "Camp" as instancing "amoral affection" more than moral protest. Compares Sontag to Isherwood; her genealogy of Camp as deriving from Enlightenment moralism is disputed as overly benevolent.

\*K227 Krusche, Martin. *Susan Sontag: Hatte eine Autopanne und mein Sohn konnte helfen: Prosa*. Gleisdorf: Garage, 1990.

Per WorldCat, Sontag is the "subject" of this "fiction."

K228 Monahan, Laurie J. "Cultural Cartography: American Designs at the 1964 Venice Biennale." In *Reconstructing Modernism: Art in New York, Paris, and Montreal 1945–1964*, edited by Serge Guilbaut, 369–416. Cambridge: MIT Press, 1990.

Inscribes Rauschenberg's optimism into a cold-war context by extended reference to B19. (On Sontag see pp. 394–7.)

K229 Rentschler, Eric. "The Elemental, the Ornamental, the Instrumental: *The Blue Light* and Nazi Film Aesthetics." In *The Other Perspective in Gender and Culture: Rewriting Women and the Symbolic*, edited by Juliet Flower MacCannell, 161–88. New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 1990.

Adduces B50 in arguing that Riefenstahl represses ("ornamentalizes") female sexuality in the interest of a life-denying greater (Nazi, male) good.

K230 Splendore, Paola. "La difficoltà de dire 'io': L'autobiografia come scrittura del limite." In *Il racconto delle donne: Voci, auto biografie, figurazioni*, edited by Angiolina Arru and Maria Teresa Chialant, 71–87. Naples: Liguori editore, 1990.

Compares "Project for a Trip to China" to *Roland Barthes par Roland Barthes* as instancing a modern autobiographical discourse "contro il patto di verità."

K231 Stieglitz, Perry. *In a Little Kingdom*. Armonk, NY: M.E.Sharpe, 1990.

Reports Sontag's visit to Laos on the return leg of her trip to Hanoi. (See pp. 159–61.)

K232 D'Antonio, Michael. "Little David, Happy at Last: Susan Sontag's Bad Boy Becomes a Man of Letters." *Esquire*, Mar. 1990, 128–35.

K233 Banas, Mary. Review of *Susan Sontag: The Elegiac Modernist*, by Sohnya Sayres. *Booklist*, 1 June 1990, 1871.

K234 Rose, Lloyd. "Hearts of Darkness: Everything You Wanted to Know about Depression." *Voice Literary Supplement*, Nov. 1990, 12–4.

Reviews William Styron's *Darkness Visible*; takes depression as an exception to Sontag's A13 view that illness should not be explained psychologically.

K235 Bertens, Hans. "Postmodern Culture(s)." In *Postmodern and Contemporary Fiction*, edited by Edmund J.Smyth, 123–37. London: B.T.Batsford, 1991.

Distinguishes among avant-garde, poststructural, and "sensuous aesthetic" postmodernisms. Adduces B15.

K236 Dollimore, Jonathan. "Post/modern: On the Gay Sensibility, or the Pervert's Revenge on Authenticity—Wilde, Genet, Orton, and Others." In *Sexual Dissidence: Augustine to Wilde, Freud to Foucault*, 307–25. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1991.

Discusses the kind of "camp" that "undermines the categories which exclude it," among them the concept of a "camp" or "gay sensibility" itself. Repeatedly adduces B11.

K237 Jumonville, Neil. "Mass Culture and the Intellectual." In *Critical Crossings: The New York Intellectuals in Postwar America*, 151–85. Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 1991.

K238 Naremore, James, and Patrick Brantlinger. "Introduction: Six Artistic Cultures." In *Modernity and Mass Culture*, edited by James Naremore and Patrick Brantlinger, 1–23. Bloomington: Indiana Univ. Press, 1991.

Compares B11 and B15 to Dwight Macdonald's "A Theory of Mass Culture" and Vincent Minnelli's *The Band Wagon*.

K239 Rieff, David. *Los Angeles: Capital of the Third World*. New York: Simon & Schuster, 1991.

Ponders the "reality" of Los Angeles as foretelling America's future. Recounts Sontag's recollections of the 1940s. See pp. 27–8, 48, 69, 243.

\*K239a *Los Angeles: Capital of the Third World*. London: Jonathan Cape, 1992.

\*K239b *Los Angeles: Capital of the Third World*. New York: Simon & Schuster, Touchstone, 1992.

K240 Zavarzadeh, Mas'ud. "Pleasure, Resistance, and the Ludic Postmodern." In *Seeing Films Politically*, 31–89. Albany: State Univ. of New York Press, 1991.

Interprets Sontag's B15 call for an "erotics" of art as an early example of "process" semiotics, a "deregulated" or "deconstructive" hermeneutics that avoids history and politics in preferring an ethics of "bliss" to a politics of "closure."

K241 Roudiez, Leon S. Review of *Susan Sontag: The Elegiac Modernist*, by Sohnya Sayres. *World Literature Today* 65 (Spring 1991):308–9.

K242 Schulte-Sasse, Linda. "Leni Riefenstahl's Feature Films and the Question of a Fascist Aesthetic." *Cultural Critique* No. 18 (Spring 1991):123–48.

Agrees with Sontag's A15 claim that Riefenstahl's appeal is not limited to Riefenstahl or her era, while contending that her fiction films are more modernist than fascist.

K242a "Leni Riefenstahl's Feature Films and the Question of a Fascist Aesthetic." In *Framing the Past: The Historiography of German Cinema and Television*, edited by Bruce A. Murray

and Christopher J. Wickham, 140–66. Carbondale: Southern Illinois Univ. Press, 1992.

K243 Poague, Leland. Review of *Susan Sontag: The Elegiac Modernist*, by Sohnya Sayres. *Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* 49 (Fall 1991):400–1.

K244 Greig, Geordie. “The Fine Art of Healing by Art.” *Sunday Times Magazine* (London), 10 Mar. 1991, 42–6.

Discusses Howard Hodgkin’s contribution to [A27](#), as well as the story’s genesis in the fatal illness of Robert Mapplethorpe.

K245 Hill, Ed, and Suzanne Bloom. “Critical Reflections.” *Artforum* 29.9 (May 1991):136–7.

Tells a fable of interpretation by extended reference to [B15](#).

K246 Ross, Andrew. “The Ecology of Images.” *South Atlantic Quarterly* 91 (Winter 1992):215–38.

Contrasts Sontag’s “idealist” to Paul Virilio’s “materialist epistemology” of images; the latter indicts photography not for depleting reality but for destroying it directly. (A long footnote on Sontag and feminist film theory is interesting.)

K247 “Sontag, Susan.” *Current Biography* 53.2 (Feb. 1992):51–5.

Updates [K34](#).

K247a “Sontag, Susan.” In *Current Biography Yearbook 1992*, edited by Judith Graham et al., 533–8. New York: H.W. Wilson Co., 1992.

K248 McMurtry, Larry. Letters (“The Condition of American Universities”). *TLS*, 19 June 1992.

Attacks Camille Paglia’s “obsessive need to denigrate Susan Sontag” by reference to Paglia’s May 22 *TLS* commentary.

K249 Wolcott, James. “Paglia’s Power Trip.” *Vanity Fair*, Sept. 1992, 238–41, 300–3.

Adduces Camille Paglia’s blood-feud critique of Sontag.

K250 Bergman, David. “Strategic Camp: The Art of Gay Rhetoric.” In *Gaiety Transfigured: Gay Self-Representation in American Literature*, 103–21. Madison: Univ. of Wisconsin Press, 1993.

Sees Camp as gay-specific. Adduces [B11](#)—as advocating a Utopian view of Camp, in connection with Alfred Chester, and as describing Mapplethorpe’s democracy of poses.

K250a “Strategic Camp: The Art of Gay Rhetoric.” In *Camp Grounds: Style and Homosexuality*, edited by David Bergman, 92–109. Amherst: Univ. of Massachusetts Press, 1993.

K251 Bredbeck, Gregory W. “B/O—Barthes’s Text/O’Hara’s Trick: The Phallus, the Anus, and the Text.” *PMLA* 108 (1993):268–82.

Critiques [B11](#) for “nominalizing” Camp as a “sensibility” rather than a semiotic “function.”

K252 Daly, Brenda O. “Ann Beattie’s *Picturing Will*: Changing Our Images of ‘Good’ Mothers and Fathers.” In *The Critical Response to Ann Beattie*, edited by Jaye Berman Montresor, 158–76. Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1993.

Takes the family of a female photographer as exemplifying Sontag’s theses on photography and meaning and family life.

K253 Jones, James W. “Refusing the Name: The Absence of AIDS in Recent American Gay Male Fiction.” In *Writing AIDS: Gay Literature, Language, and Analysis*, edited by Timothy F. Murphy and Susanne Poirier, 225–43. New York: Columbia Univ. Press, 1993.

Takes [C12](#) as prefiguring a subgenre of AIDS literature that refuses the “homosexuality=AIDS” locution.

K254 Munk, Erika. “Notes from a Trip to Sarajevo.” *Theater* 24.3 (1993):15–30.

K255 Pastore, Judith Laurence. “What Are the Responsibilities of Representing AIDS?” In *Confronting AIDS through Literature: The Responsibilities of Representation*, edited by Judith Laurence Pastore, 15–35. Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1993.

Discusses David Leavitt’s [K218](#) response to [C12](#) as well as reviews of [A20b](#) in considering “literary AIDS.”

K256 Polan, Dana. Review of *Susan Sontag: The Elegiac Modernist*, by Sohnya Sayres. *Sub-Stance* No. 70 (1993):127–32.

K257 Robertson, Pamela. “‘The Kinda Comedy That Imitates Me’: Mae West’s Identification with the Feminist Camp.” *Cinema Journal* 32.2 (Winter 1993):57–72.

Disputes the equation of Camp with gay male culture.

*K257a* “‘The Kinda Comedy That Imitates Me’: Mae West’s Identification with the Feminist Camp.” In *Camp Grounds: Style and Homosexuality*, edited by David Bergman, 156–72. Amherst: Univ. of Massachusetts Press, 1993.

K258 Wyatt, Justin. “College Course File: AIDS, the Mass Media, and Cultural Politics.” *Journal of Film and Video* 45.2–3 (Summer-Fall 1993):91–105.

Adduces [A13](#), [A20b](#), and [B11](#).

K259 Elsaesser, Thomas. “Portrait of the Artist as a Young Woman.” *Sight and Sound*, n.s., 3.2 (Feb. 1993):14–8.

Contests the “received” wisdom ([B50](#)) on Riefenstahl.

*K259a* “Leni Riefenstahl: The Body Beautiful, Art Cinema and Fascist Aesthetics.” In *Women and Film: A Sight and Sound Reader*, edited by Pam Cook and Philip Dodd, 186–97. London: Scarlet Press, n.d. [1993].

K259b “Leni Riefenstahl: The Body Beautiful, Art Cinema and Fascist Aesthetics.” In *Women and Film: A Sight and Sound Reader*, edited by Pam Cook and Philip Dodd, 186–97. Philadelphia: Temple Univ. Press, 1993.

K260 Zohlen, Gerwin. “Brief zum Roman, zur Biographie und zu sonstigen Weiterungen des heutigen Erlebens: An Susan Sontag.” *Sprache im technischen Zeitalter* (Berlin) No. 125 (Mar. 1993): 97–104.

This “letter” to Sontag responds to her doubts about [A28](#)’s mixture of fact and story telling by reference to Kracauer’s approach to the issue in *Das Ornament der Masse*.

K261 di Giovanni, Janine. “Waiting for the Barbarians.” *Sunday Times* (London), 8 Aug. 1993, sec. 9, 6–7.

Reports the circumstances of Sontag’s Sarajevo production of Beckett’s *Waiting for Godot*.

K262 Burns, John F. “To Sarajevo, Writer Brings Good Will and ‘Godot.’” *New York Times*, 19 Aug. 1993, [A3](#).

K263 Pomfret, John. “‘Godot’ amid the Gunfire: In Bosnia, Sontag’s Take on Beckett.” *Washington Post*, 19 Aug. 1993, [C1](#), [C6](#).

K264 Narayan, Natasha. “A Candle in the Dark.” *Guardian* (Manchester), 20 Aug. 1993, supplement, 2–3.

Of interest for comments *about* Sontag by Bosnian journalists and theater colleagues.

K265 Mitchison, Amanda. “The Play’s the Thing.” *Independent Magazine* (London), 21 Aug. 1993, 18–23.

Takes the production circumstances of Sontag’s *Waiting for Godot* as figuring Sarajevo’s fortunes more generally.

K266 Kramer, Hilton. “In Sarajevo, False Echoes of Spain.” *Wall Street Journal* 24 Aug. 1993, [A14\(E\)](#).

Accuses Sontag of “complicity in evil” for equating Bosnia with Republican Spain.

K267 Schwartz, Stephen, Danny Schecter, and Steve Wasserman. “Susan Sontag’s Moral Obligation.” *Wall Street Journal*, 3 Sept. 1993, [A9\(E\)](#).

Three letters replying to (disputing) Kramer (see [K266](#)).

K268 Wille, Franz. “Berlin: Normalzustand Verzweiflung.” *Theater heute* (Seelze), Nov. 1993, 58.

Reviews Robert Wilson’s Berlin production of *Alice in Bed*.

K269 Highsmith, Patricia, et al. “International Books of the Year: Thirty-two Writers Select the Books that Most Impressed Them in 1993.” *TLS*, 3 Dec. 1993, 9–13.

Highsmith (p. 9) discusses *The Volcano Lover* as having been the most pleasurable read of 1993.

## Index of Authors

Our index entries treat the bibliography entries and sub-entries equally, as they appear sequentially in the text. Thus “B15–9g” indicates that a given author or title features either in the entry or annotation of every item between B15 and B19g, with no exceptions. Similarly, an entry such as “J164–5, J165b–c” indicates that sub-entry J165a does *not* include the pertinent author name or title, thus breaking the sequence, and would indicate as well that any and all subentries of J164, if there are any, *do* include pertinent information. Some items appear twice in the bibliography proper, though each item bears only one item number. In such instances, triple asterisks appear in the “item number” place of the “other listing.”

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